

Tillsonburg POST

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Station View Developments given green light by council

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A downtown development that initially resulted in pack council chambers was given the go-ahead by town council at the March 24 meeting with less fanfare.

Station View Developments, which the BMI Group owns, is proposing a development that will fill the block between Venison Street West, Bridge Street West, Rolph Street and Bidwell Street. It will consist of several buildings with a mix of residential and commercial uses and a courtyard in the centre. It will also provide a permanent home to the farmer's market

The present design, with a nine-storey tower facing Bridge Street, an eight-storey tower facing Venison, a three-storey townhouse complex, and a two-storey commercial building facing Bridge, was a redesign from the original plan. The original design included a 12-story tower and would house 276 units, while the present design is for 188 residential units.

The issue was before town council for multiple zoning changes, including increasing the maximum height of an apartment building, reducing parking requirements, and changing the allowed uses in the commercial component of the building.

Planner Marc Davidson reported only one letter of objection from the public, which discussed the quality of life changing for existing residents. He also said the development would require 432 parking spaces, but it is only providing 293. Davidson recommended approval of the changes with pay-in-lieu-of-parking at the time of site plan approval.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

A CENTURY OF CARING

The 100th year of the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH) and TDMH Volunteer Association will be celebrated with several events through the year, but the big one will be the "A Century of Caring Gala" on May 10. From the left, Loralee Heemskerck, Gerry Dearing and Nadia Facca, hold tickets for the event, which will be available from the TDMH and TDMH Foundation offices.

Gala to celebrate Hospital's 100th

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A big gala is being planned to celebrate the 100th year of Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital (TDMH).

A Century of Caring Gala – An Evening of Storytelling is planned for Saturday, May 10 in the Lion's Auditorium of the Tillsonburg Community Centre. Organized by TDMH, the TDMH Volunteer Association and the TDMH Foundation, the evening will feature a delectable meal followed by storytelling about the hospital.

"We are super excited to host this event. It's an opportunity to come together and celebrate this incredible

milestone for our hospital and the volunteer association," said Loralee Heemskerck, a retired employee who is the co-lead of the organizing committee for the gala with TDMH Foundation Executive Director Gerry Dearing.

Tillsonburg businessman John Smith's foresight was responsible for building the hospital. A former town mayor, he bequeathed the land where the hospital sits in his will and it was opened in 1925 as the Tillsonburg Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

"He saw the need for a facility to care for the sick," said Nadia Facca, Integrated President and CEO of Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll and TDMH.

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Tickets now on sale for hospital 100th gala

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The name was changed to Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital in the 1950s during an expansion. Many expansions and renovations have taken place over the years. TDMH is now a 50-bed acute care hospital with a full emergency department, ambulatory care, complex continuing care, general surgery, orthopaedic surgery and diagnostic services.

The TDMH Volunteer Association was also founded in 1925.

"The volunteers are integral members of our health care team," Facca said. "We are very fortunate for 100 years of dedication of volunteers at our hospital!"

Heemskerck said the gala will start with a complementary 100th year celebratory drink and appetizers. Chrissy's Catering will deliver a meal sure to taunt the tastebuds with various food stations, including pasta, seafood and a protein station with beef tenderloin, chicken and lamb served with roasted and garlic mashed potatoes.

Kelly Spender, a lifelong resident, town councillor and daughter of former TDMH President and CEO Jim Spencer, will be the emcee for an evening of storytelling. Heemskerck said the guest speakers affiliated with the hospital will "share heart-warming stories about their community hospital and what it means to them."

Display tables and poster boards will highlight the hospital's history and add a bit of nostalgia to the evening.

"It's an evening to celebrate our past, present and future of TDMH, as well as our dedicated team members, physicians and volunteers," Facca said.

Tickets for the 19-plus event are \$120,

with a \$50 income tax receipt issued to the purchaser. Tickets can be purchased through the hospital and foundation administration offices. Heemskerck said there are only 200 tickets available and they are going fast.

Facca said proceeds from the evening will go to the hospital's bed replacement program and other high priority equipment needs. The bed replacement program is the focus of the foundation's '100 for 100' Campaign 2025. This donation campaign is seeking one donor at \$100,000, 10 donors at \$10,000, 100 donors at \$1,000 and 1,000 donors at \$100. All donors will become members of the '100 for 100 Club', and a list of club members will be on permanent display in the hospital.

"The bed replacement is a physical need so we are focusing on those," Facca said. A single medical-surgical hospital bed costs \$17,000. Intensive care (specialty) beds cost around \$50,000 each.

The 100th year celebrations started with TDMH being the charity of choice for the Oxford Hills Holiday Market in December. The Copper Mug hosted a Winter Warmer Evening in January. An internal birthday bash was held for team members and volunteers in March. A special event for TDMH volunteers will be held in April. A tent highlighting a century of TDMH and the TDMH Volunteer Association will be set up at the foundation's Taste of Summer event on May 31.

Facca and Heemskerck encouraged the public to share their tales of the hospital on social media using #TDMH100Years #TDMHVolunteers100years

Parking concerns raised for Station View Developments

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Coun. Chris Parker said he was struggling with the reduction in parking spaces.

"We already have a lack of parking in the downtown," he said. "We are now looking at dropping it by over 100 parking spaces of what is required."

He questioned how multiple cars per unit will be dealt with, noting that parking is a struggle for the Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing Corporation, which he is a member of. Parker asked what protection there would be for the town to maintain parking.

Davidson said that changes to the town's comprehensive bylaw, lowering the number of parking spaces per unit from 1.5 to 1.25, would lower the number of spaces needed for the residential component from 282 to 235. He suggested cash-in-lieu parking to establish more parking downtown and mentioned an institutional parking lot to the west that could present an opportunity.

Answering Coun. Chris Rosehart's question about what is a reasonable distance to walk when parking, Davidson said it's relative but generally 75 yards.

"It does seem like a lot of parking that is going to have to be found," agreed Coun. Kelly Spencer.

Rosehart asked how much parking would be reduced if the development was lowered to five storeys. Davidson said the application was for nine storeys, so that is what the calculations were.

Coun. Bob Parsons noted that other municipalities require less parking in the downtown area.

"If you talk to the applicants, they will say our standards are quite high," he said.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy noted one difference is Tillsonburg doesn't have a sophisticated transit system.

"We're still a community that relies on the car and will be for a while," she said.

Although he had concerns about parking, Parker said the development is positive for the downtown.

"As the downtown continues to grow, we need to ensure we have adequate housing for people working in the downtown," he said.

Spencer said one of the benefits of in-

tertainment is that it eliminates the need to use farmland for development.

"I am concerned a little bit about the parking, but if it meets the standards than I trust the experts," she said.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres said he was talking to a couple of seniors considering giving up their cars, and a development close to downtown could be part of the solution. He said it also presents an option for people working in restaurants who don't have a car.

Gilvesy said she appreciated the re-designing of the development to address some of the initial concerns.

"I watched an eight-story going up across the road from me, I've been watching it storey by storey, and I can't imagine it in the downtown core," she said. "We do have some responsibility to preserve some heritage and height factors in the downtown core. I would love to see this building at five or six stories. I can't see myself driving down Broadway and seeing a nine-storey building - otherwise it's a beautiful development in the downtown. The commercial development is much needed in the downtown."

Council passed a motion approving the zone changes in principle, advising the county it approved of the associated official plan changes and directing staff to collect payment in lieu of parking.

Interviewed after, Sarah Senior, chair of the Tillsonburg District Craft Guild/Station Arts Centre, said board members were excited and fully support the development and the benefits it will bring to the community. She said it could be complementary to the vision "to create a dynamic, inclusive and progressive environment." However, there are concerns about parking and accessibility.

"Many of our artists, especially potters, quilters, and other creators, frequently transport large and bulky items," Senior said. "Given the nature of our operations, ensuring that all visitors can easily access our building is vital."

She said many of the members are seniors, and it's crucial the development design takes accessibility needs of the station patrons into account by not creating a long walk from parking spaces.

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our community!*

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Station View will change the downtown forever

With the approval of Station View Development Inc.'s plan that will span a downtown block, the look of Tillsonburg's downtown will be changed in both good and bad ways.

The anchor of the development will be two towers – one nine storeys, one eight – with residential units and a commercial strip facing Bridge Street. To put that in perspective, nine storeys is three times the height of the nearby hospital.

On the positive, the development helps the town meet provincial intensification targets, the development isn't taking out farm land, it will provide a home for the farmer's market and it brings new commercial opportunities to the downtown. The big

negatives are the aesthetic impacts of the height – it's only one block off Broadway – and the lack of parking.

Almost every member of council raised concerns about parking, but in the end, they granted pay-in-lieu parking for 139 spaces since the underground parking in the development will be short that many spaces. This means the developer will need to pay a still-to-be-determined cost for developing the parking spaces it's short.

The area surrounding the development can be busy. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church had the use of a lot on the development grounds it will lose. The future of the parking spaces in front of the Station Arts Centre are up

in the air with the possible reimagining of Bridge Street. Drive by when one of the many activities is underway in the Station and there aren't too many empty spaces.

Pay-in-lieu parking is designed to allow development of more spaces, and council will have another go at it through site plan control. But the big question is where? To put it in perspective, the two downtown lots to the west of Broadway between Washington Grand Ave and Brock Street West have about 125 spaces. Outside of the church, Station Arts Centre, all the surrounding land is residential.

Let's hope planners have a solution to the parking problem, but it's going to take a lot of creativity.

We're expecting! Tillsonburg Post goes weekly on June 19



STEWART GRANT

Publisher

When we launched the Tillsonburg Post as a bi-weekly newspaper on Sept. 19, 2024, I never could have imagined that just nine months later, we'd be able to graduate to a weekly publication.

However, I'm delighted to announce that we are doing just that. On June 19, 2025, the Tillsonburg Post is going weekly.

In my newspaper career, I've had the thrill of launching newspapers on eight separate occasions. While each has been special to me, nothing has compared to the wonderful response we have received in Tillson-

burg.

The reasons why our small company starts newspapers as bi-weekly (instead of weekly) is two-fold.

The first reason is financial. It costs a fair bit of money to print the newspapers and to compensate our team of writers, graphic designers and deliverers, and these costs go up quite a bit if there are twice as many editions.

The second reason for starting as a bi-weekly paper is that I want the community to take an active role in the newspaper and to be instrumental in helping us graduate to a weekly edition. Whereas if you start as a weekly, then there's nothing to strive towards together.

From day one, Tillsonburg (and surrounding area) residents, business owners, and community organizations have supported our newspaper unlike anything we've seen before, and we are so grateful. In a day and age where some people

wrongly assume that newspapers are a dying industry, Tillsonburg is proving them wrong. In a community that cares, anything is possible.

One of my best-ever memories in the newspaper business was meeting Bill Pratt at Annandale House on the morning of Sept. 19 and handing him the very first copy of the Tillsonburg Post's inaugural edition. I extended my arm to shake his hand, but instead of this formality, he gave me a great hug. As we visited throughout the morning, I could see how truly happy he was to see the return of a dedicated community newspaper to Tillsonburg. This is what it's all about – making a difference to people. As we make this announcement the success of the Tillsonburg Post, it is with a tear in my eye as I think about Bill, whose life we celebrate this week, and whose lifelong efforts of bettering his community can be recognized within these printed pages.

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Tillsonburg POST

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1. Everyone has a story
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6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Pratt was a community and newspaper builder

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Flags in Tillsonburg flew at half-mast this week to recognize the passing of Bill Pratt.

A former Citizen of the Year, editor and co-owner of The Tillsonburg News, Pratt was well known for his work in the community. He was a recipient of the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Confederation Medal, the Canada/Holland Medal and a Paul Harris Fellow.

Pratt's wide-ranging contributions can be seen in so many places in the community today. The many local institutions he contributed to include: Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre, the second ice pad, the kidney dialysis unit in Tillsonburg, Theatre Tillsonburg, the Tillsonburg Campus of Fanshawe College, the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce, the Tillsonburg Air Show, the Tillsonburg Community Centre, the addition to the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, and the Tillsonburg Seniors' Centre. He was president of Tillsonburg Fair Board, and a volunteer with the local branch of the Canadian Cancer Society for over 60 years. Bill and his wife Marion joined the Tillsonburg Curling Club in the early 1960's. He served on the board and continued actively curling until January of this year.

"He was just a super, super person," said former Mayor John Armstrong. "The term gentleman applied to him to the n-th degree. He was so involved in the community and did everything with taste and finesse."

Pratt's work with Annandale National Historic Site and Museum was honoured with the changing exhibit gallery

being named in his honour.

Joan Weston, a volunteer at Annandale National Historic Site, said Pratt was involved with the historical society for 50 years. He was one of the five people who put down \$1,000 each to save Annandale House from demolition, and has continued to volunteer.

"He still came and brought them (staff) coffee and donuts at least once per week, and visited with them," she said.

Former Mayor and Tillsonburg News and Independent publisher Cam McKnight provided insight into Pratt's time in the industry. His grandfather HF Johnston was the owner-publisher of the Tillsonburg News when Pratt started working there full-time in 1950.

"With a degree in journalism from Western, I'm sure he instantly raised the editorial level at the News. Barely two years later he became the local editor," McKnight recounted.

His father JCR McKnight became friends with Pratt and the two became partners and purchased the News in the 1960s. The News went to three times a week under their management and the business grew to seven weeks as Otter Publishing.

Pratt also became the president of the Ontario Community Newspaper Association and Canadian Community Newspaper Association.

"One of the duties he cherished, and detested, was writing the lead editorial for the Tillsonburg editions. Unfailingly, as the deadline approached Bill — with a cigar burning in his office ashtray — would be pounding on his old typewriter searching for the words to encourage or admonish Tillsonburg residents and municipal leaders,"

he said. "He would put the News's editorial sway, and it was considerable in those days, either behind or against local affairs and explain his reasoning for it."

Expanding on Pratt's influence, McKnight said, "Bill had the unique ability of being able to make his point without making an enemy. That trait followed him beyond just the newspaper arena and allowed him to influence many major projects in this town."

Amongst the journalists who Pratt influenced was Post columnist Paul Knowles, who gave him his first job as a journalist.

"I would not have had a 50-plus year career as a writer without him," he said. "He taught me to work hard, write a lot, re-write even more. Even though I was a rookie, he let me write a personal column, a style that is with me to this day in my travel pieces. He loved his community, from that day to the day he died, and part of our job at the newspaper was to support all the things Bill cared about, including the Tillsonburg Fair. I think it is fair to say I owe much of my enjoyment in a life of writing to Bill Pratt. A great man."

There is a saying amongst journalists that those who are devoted to newspapers have "ink running through their veins." Although Pratt hasn't worked full time as a newspaper editor in decades, he couldn't stay away. When the Post launched its first edition, Pratt was on hand to be one of the first to get his hands on a paper that brought community news back to Tillsonburg. And, he contributed to it, sending an occasional photo and ensuring I was up to date on community happenings.

If ink ran through his veins, so too did helping the community.

Supporting those who are ready to respond



**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Some people know what they want to do with their lives from an early age, and they work toward that goal until they make it happen.

For Ted Sanders, his desire to become a first responder solidified during his high school co-op placements, but the pivotal moment was a conversation that he had with his driving instructor, who also taught him first aid. Seeing how invested and interested young Sanders was, he suggested looking into it as a profession.

Reflecting on his 32 years as a paramedic and volunteer firefighter, Sanders said: "What I'm doing now is what I was meant to do. I achieved all of my childhood dreams."

Tillsonburg has always been Ted's home. Even when he lived in Windsor to attend St. Clair college for his paramedic training, he was able to do his placement here. His neighbour, who was an "ambulance attendant" became his mentor, then his coworker, and finally, his partner.

"I was his student, and he taught me everything I needed to know to be a paramedic," Sanders said with gratitude.

Over the course of his career, Sanders has witnessed a great deal of change in the role of paramedics. He explained that in the early days, "we had assessment skills; we could give oxygen and treat trauma. We were first aiders with some training and a fast vehicle to get people to the hospital."

Now paramedics are highly trained health professionals

and have many more abilities and options at their disposal.

"There has been a paradigm shift," Sanders said. "Now we may stay on the scene and provide interventions aimed at the best possible outcomes and shorter hospital stays, while knowing what our limitations are."

There are times when immediate transportation to the hospital is required, of course, but it isn't a foregone conclusion. Sanders also notes that when you arrive by ambulance, the triage nurse is responsible for deciding the order of severity.

Sanders has delivered babies and achieved out-of-hospital saves, successfully resuscitating patients, but there's a darker side for first responders, and although they are trained to follow protocols and do their job under extreme stress, what they must witness and experience often catches up with them later.

Early in his career there were no support services. Sanders recalls being hypersensitive to noises and seeing danger everywhere. Driving around town he would recall various accidents or fatalities that he had attended. As awareness of post traumatic stress grew, a dedicated group of paramedics created a peer support team. Sanders is one of the original members. While it isn't a substitute for professional help, the intensive training they receive can be the difference between life and death for first responders who are suffering in silence.

"We want to remove the stigma," Sanders explained, "heroes are human."

Therapy helped him work through some of his early ordeals in the field that had been affecting him. He is a tireless and courageous advocate on the topic, sharing his own experiences in a private FB group, as well as an upcoming documentary, in the hope that others will reach out for help.

The challenges faced by first responders on the job can impact their families. Sanders spoke lovingly about Tricia, his wife of 25 years, his home and his children.

"She's the most precious thing in the world," he said. "The support that she gives must be recognized; our homes are our safe places."

Sanders relishes the opportunity to mentor students, laying the foundation for their careers in service of the community. During his evaluations, he often encourages student paramedics to reflect on their own readiness. It's an intense level of responsibility, but he reminds them that it is also a privilege:

"There are 25,000 people who are able to sleep tonight knowing that you are ready to respond if they need you."



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Spring brings with it unwanted wildlife in our homes



**THE
STAGE
IS THE
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Spring is here! Time to cut down the tree, trim the hedge, clean out the shed. But wait!!! Due to climate change, spring is no longer the only wildlife baby season, so please check for any kind nest before any project. If you find a nest with young ones, please wait a few weeks and let their moms finish raising the wee ones.

Trapping wildlife? Please listen carefully for squeaks or chirps from babies and/or once trapped, and check if that it is a lactating mother. If so, put mom back. Two days later you don't want to see babies crawling out starving for food.

Are there squirrels or raccoons in your

attic? Better check before you fix the soffit/facia. Don't trap them there, they may chew their way down into your house.

Don't presume you will get a wildlife rehabber to take the babies, as there are only 45 authorized wildlife custodians in our entire province, so chances of finding one with room for your litter could be difficult. Many wildlife rehabilitators deal only with orphaned wildlife not injured or diseased adult wildlife. As a wildlife rehabber, we get no pay or assistance from the Ministry of Natural Resources [MNR] so many work other full-time jobs to afford rehabilitating the orphans. There are very few larger wildlife centres, and none in the Tillsonburg area.

Wildlife prefers consistent, free food and accommodation. If you are feeding your dog or cat outside, or feed the birds - which attracts mice, insects, and the larger mammals which eat the smaller ones - they will come! If they can knock over or get into your garbage, they will come. Accommodations close to food are preferred: in or under sheds, gazebos, garages, woodpiles, open garage doors, or down a chimney with no protective cap. Some animals can chew their way through the

soffit/facia, so keep your property maintained.

Did you know that as the property owner, you are responsible for the wildlife on your property? Most property owners and the public in general, don't know that, nor know the rules for trapping or moving wildlife. Do you know how to deal with a diseased animal or one injured and in pain? This is a potentially harmful situation. If there is no one who can help and you feel the animals should be put down quickly, you should check the rules, both municipal and provincial, first to know if you can legally do so. Realize also that if you move a diseased animal to a different area, it will be infecting the animals there.

You can try a vet, alas most veterinarians can't take the chance of bringing diseased wildlife into their clinics and too many people can't afford the average \$200 to \$470 plus taxes, for a cat or dog size animal to be painlessly euthanized.

If you wish the animal to move off on its own and hopefully take the babies as well, there is a simple, cheap solution as most wildlife, do not like the smell of the original Pine-Sol. Pour it around the shed or area, full strength, but not on the en-

trance way as it may hurt their skin. Then leave them alone. If it is a mother, it may take her a day or two to ready a new nest and move the babies, but many will do it. In sheds, attics, garage etc., you can soak rags or a block of wood in the Pine-Sol. Then sprinkle flour at the entrance to see the footprints coming out and be ready to repair and block the entrance once everyone is gone.

You can add light, which is why animals choose dark attics, sheds and under porches etc. Put a safe utility light where they are for a few days, 24 hours a day and they will leave. An added incentive to leave can be placing a boom box on the floor of the shed or porch etc., with deep vibrating bass. You want mom to be uncomfortable, so she will move them not to scare her away for good.

I no longer rehabilitate but you can call me at 519 842 9416 for information.

If you need a pest control and/or animal removal company, check online carefully and most say they service Tillsonburg, but are located in cities, which will take more travel time. You want those actually located in Tillsonburg. I found only one: Tillsonburg Pest and Wildlife Removal.

Tillsonburg council briefs

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Council pay released

As required by the Municipal Act, remuneration and expenses for the mayor and council members were released for 2024.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy was paid \$44,387, plus per diems for sitting on the police services and hydro boards as well as expenses and health benefits for a total of \$64,699. Deputy Mayor Dave Beres received a salary of \$22,238 and additional per diems for police services, hydro, outside meeting per diems and expenses for a \$41,398 total. All councillors received salaries \$20,716 (plus or minus a few cents), plus health care and expenses for totals ranging from a low of \$26,935 for Coun. Chris Parker to a high of \$31,324 (her total included police services board) for Coun. Chris Rosehart. Coun. Kelly Spencer's expenses were the highest amongst council members at \$3,546.

Police Services Board members Art Baumonk, Larry Scanlan and Rebecca Turrill received total payouts ranging from \$3,213 for Baumonk to \$7,865 for Scanlan, who is the board chair.

Tillsonburg Hydro Board members Ken Edwards, Robert Kent, Laura Pickersgill, Kyle Pratt, Dan Rasokas, Cedric Tomico, John Veldman and Ernie Vidovic received remuneration ranging from \$7,312 to \$9,141 for Rasokas, who is the chair.

Runway repairs

Tillsonburg council adopted a recommendation from its Airport Advisory

Committee to seal the cracks in the runway. The committee asked for the repairs to be included in the annual budget.

Coun. Chris Parker said this needs to be done before the condition of the runway gets worse.

"It's imperative we do this on a regular basis so we don't have a major problem," he said.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy said it hadn't been done in a long time.

"If it doesn't get done, we risk having to repave the runway, which would be in the millions of dollars versus \$60,000 for crack sealing," she said.

Loads of Laundry receives grant

Loads of Laundry, a new business on Tillson Ave., was a recipient of the town's community improvement plan. The business received \$10,000 for exterior repairs.

Lease extended

A lease for agricultural land with VanQuathem Farms was extended for a year by town council.

The lease covers land in the second phase of the VanNorman Innovation Park. It includes an increase in the rent fee from \$340 to \$370.

Lake Lisgar weir repair

Following reports of growing sedimentation in the north end of Lake Lisgar, Tillsonburg council endorsed a bid from Watech Services Inc. for \$120,00 to fix the low flow water weir adjacent to Concession Street. The weir is essentially a drain, which is stuck and was last opened in 1969.

Fixing the weir would be the first step in draining the lake to allow silt removal.

Tillsonburg supports Buy Canadian movement

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A motion passed by Tillsonburg council throws the town's support behind the Team Canada movement and calls for the town to buy Canadian whenever possible.

Introduced by Coun. Kelly Spencer, and seconded by Deputy Mayor Dave Beres, the motion speaks to the impacts of American tariffs on Canada, and that the municipality can assist combating tariffs by supporting Canadian businesses in its procurement for capital and infrastructure programs. It directs town staff to ensure bidding and contract language is utilized to rely on Canadian companies where possible.

"This motion is supporting that we as a municipality can do our part as well as supporting local businesses," Spencer said during the meeting.

She explained in a later interview that the motion was similar to one many municipalities have passed.

"It was introduced by Deputy Mayor Beres and myself, in consultation with staff, to ensure alignment with our purchasing policies," she said. "The goal is to prioritize supporting Canadian businesses whenever possible."

Coun. Chris Parker asked if the municipality will have to look at its procurement policy if the motion passes. Director of Finance Renato Pullia said as long as the tender is below the spending levels requiring by trade agreements, there is no need to amend the purchasing policy.

Answering a question from Mayor Deb Gilvesy about how much local companies rely on the American market, Development Commissioner Cephias Panschow said there are roughly 3,000 jobs tied to companies that do business in

the United States, or about 30 per cent of jobs.

"The U.S., notwithstanding some of the acrimony in the media these days, is an important trading partner for Tillsonburg companies and Tillsonburg manufacturers," he said.

Gilvesy asked if he had recommendations on how the town could aid local businesses. He suggested buying local, and that local businesses aren't taking full advantage of European trade agreements.

"Ultimately we are an hour-and-a-half to two hours from the border so logistically trade is easy with the U.S. versus trying to get on an ocean liner across the ocean," Gilvesy said.

Parker, who voted against the motion in a recorded vote, said he works in the auto industry and wouldn't be supporting it.

"This is more of a symbolic gesture than it is anything else," he said. "I do agree the federal government and the provincial government is where these discussions need to be had. These are the people negotiating with the U.S. We need to look to make sure we are taking care of our companies in town first."

In a recorded vote, the motion passed with Spencer, Beres, Coun. Pete Luciani, Coun. Bob Parsons and Gilvesy voting for it and Parker and Coun. Chris Rosehart voting against it.

Spencer later said she has already heard of the impacts locally.

"In discussions with a couple local business owners, one shared how they've had to adjust and explore new opportunities for trade," she said. "Another mentioned that the town's website page on tariff support has been a valuable resource."

The web site is available at <https://www.tillsonburg.ca/business-and-development/invest-in-tillsonburg/business-support/tariff-support/>

Council questions zoning update changes

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

What could be called housekeeping updates to Tillsonburg's comprehensive zoning bylaw raised some questions at council.

The question if the new zoning for emergency care establishments should be permitted in certain zoning types was the big question highlighted in the report. It was suggested this zoning be restricted to not include properties fronting on Broadway. The changes also included updates to include new provincial provisions for additional residential units in R1 zoning, increasing the maximum driveway width from 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the front yard, decreasing the amount of parking needed in commercial, school and multi-unit residential from 1.5 to 1.25 per dwelling unit, and other bookkeeping changes.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres asked how the changes to maximum driveway width will affect lot coverage. Previously, there were restrictions that the maximum ground coverage on a lot was 36 or 38 per cent to allow groundwater to get through the grass to the aquifer, he noted.

"Is this going to affect those numbers," Beres asked.

Planner Marc Davidson said there isn't a change in overall lot coverage. He said there have been discussions with the engineering group and one of the discussion is the increasing amount of impermeable surface on a lot.

Beres asked, and it was confirmed, the solution may be decreasing, for example, deck size to increase driveway size.

Coun. Kelly Spencer commented that second choices for zoning for emergency

care establishments seem counterintuitive as with the word "emergency" it denotes a sense of urgency, but outlines a minimum 90 days to two months to get through the process, and if an emergency shelter is needed it would be more immediate. Davidson said this is correct and the planning act isn't a quick document.

Mayor Deb Gilvesy was glad to see the amount of parking needed for school zones increasing, and asked if that would just be for future schools. Davidson said that was correct unless there were modifications to existing schools. She also noted the reduction in parking from 1.5 to 1.25 parking spaces, asking if this is occurring in other municipalities as well.

When she was told it was the case from Davidson, Gilvesy asked if there are any statistics to show there are fewer automobiles per household. Davidson said this was based on what surrounding municipalities were doing. Gilvesy is noticing a growing number of multigenerational homes with three or four cars.

"I was down a street the other day and literally dodging vehicles on the other side," she said. "I am not sure we aren't contributing to some of the parking problems in town."

Davidson said this is controlled through the planning process, but doesn't include additional residential units. He said wider driveways are part of the solution.

"The intent is to get as many vehicles as we can off the street," Davidson said.

Council accepted the changes and opted for the option for emergency care facilities to be allowed in the central commercial and entrepreneurial district not fronting Broadway, as well as institutional areas, instead of requiring site-specific zoning.

Large item collection begins

Those making plans for spring cleaning should take note of the large item collection.

After starting in Ingersoll on March 31, the event continues through the county over the next two months.

This collection is for oversized household items only, and is not intended for general spring clean-up. Acceptable materials include household furniture, carpet rolls and under padding (six inches maximum, rolled and bundled), pool filters (no sand), pool covers, water softeners (no salt or contents inside), mattresses, and box springs. Unacceptable items like glass, mirrors, automotive parts, small garbage that can fit into garbage bags, and items

piled on trailers/wagons or loose in cardboard boxes will not be collected. A complete list of acceptable and unacceptable materials is available at www.wasteline.ca.

Large items must be set out by 7 a.m. on the Monday of your collection week, including statutory holidays. Late set outs may not be collected. Bag tags are not required for large items; however, each item must not exceed 45 kg (100 lbs). Residents are responsible for removing any unacceptable items left at the curb.

Collection dates are: Norwich, May 12; South-West Oxford, June 2 and Tillsonburg: June 16 (Zone 1), June 23 (Zone 2), June 30 (Zone 3).

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The benefits and detriments of common garden insects



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SUE HEALEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Once winter loosens its chill grip, I am seized with the need to be outside. There doesn't seem to be a moment to waste now that the sun shines more readily and there are full days of warmth.

But I've learned over my years in the garden, to tread lightly in these early days of spring. The ground is cold and frozen in the shadows. Digging and planting are weeks away. There are many good things still at rest in the garden. Beyond dormant plants and yet to bloom bulbs, is a world of beneficial insects nestled in the leaf cover, burrowed just underground, or sleeping in last year's stalks. Pollinators, natural predators and their prey are important aspects of a healthy garden and many need time to come out of hibernation. Instead of tidying, I'll use these early weeks of spring to refresh my knowledge of what lies waiting to emerge, the good bugs and the bad.

On the most common garden pests, aphids,

has a natural predator that is just as well known. Lady Bugs (Coccinellidae), the dotted beetle of nursery rhyme fame is a voracious aphid hunter. They can be found, along with their alligator-shaped offspring in amongst the colonies of aphids, happily impaling and consuming them by the dozens. I watch every spring as my *Euonymus*' new growth is curled by hordes of aphids, only to be wiped out within a few weeks by the Lady Bugs and their young. The sight is truly a marvel and one I encourage you to seek out.

While Lady Bugs need no introduction, but pale green Lacewings (Chrysopidae) might. An important predator of aphids, scale, mites and other pests, this delicate looking insect has a slender body with large, veined wings and dark, round eyes. Lacewings are skilled hunters in almost every stage of their lives; their nymphs (juvenile offspring) are so ferocious, they are dubbed "aphid lions". Lacewings lay their eggs on the underside of tree and shrub leaves, so letting leaves lie is an important step to encouraging beneficial insect populations. Providing over-wintering, nesting and feeding sites will encourage populations for generations. If natural predators are in short supply, they can be purchased at some garden centres or online.

Scale, another sap sucking insect that we often find on our shrubs and trees, protects itself with a waxy or cottony outer shell. While they feed on many types of plants and can sap the life out of them if left unchecked, scale is also a

food source for many beneficial insects. Lacewings, syrphid flies, and parasitic wasps all feed on scale's various life stages and can keep most populations in balance. When numbers do get out of control and native predators are overwhelmed, dormant oil sprayed over affected limbs can be an effective control measure. In some cases, only the removal of the affected plant will ensure that the scale does not spread to neighbouring plantings.

We all have caterpillars of one sort or another in the garden. There is a thin line between friend and foe when we think of the caterpillar. They are the larval stage of so many things, moths, butterflies, beetles. They are destroyers of crops, like the codling moths (*Cydia pomonella*) that leave worms in your apples. They are producers of the crop, like the silkworm (*Bombyx mori*) that spins the finest thread. They are magicians, weaving themselves into objects of pure fantasy and delight.

So, I go with a light hand when hunting in the garden. I rely on manual control, and only when numbers threaten the health of its host. But mostly, I let the wasps do my pest control. Of all the beneficials I have discovered, wasps have been perhaps the most wickedly wonderful. There are hundreds of types; tiny to large, metallic to dull, thin waisted and long legged. Almost all are natural predators of caterpillars, scale, mites and leaf hoppers. Wasps both feed directly on their prey and use them for their young. Live prey can be stuffed into chambers along with unhatched eggs or laid directly on

their prey, a ready meal once eggs have hatched.

More macabre still, some wasps lay their eggs inside the host so that it is consumed from inside. Viburnum Leaf Roller, Tomato Hornworm, and even June bugs are all parasitized by different types of wasps that are readily found in our gardens. Native wasps and bees are usually solitary, incidental pollinators and harmless to humans. While they feed on other insects, they also use nectar and pollen as food sources and can be attracted to the garden with flowering plants such as sea holly, sweet alyssum and statice. Nesting sites include dead tree trunks, hollowed plant reeds and underground burrows.

There are others that have come to visit and taste what lives around my home. There are bugs and weevils, leaf hoppers and miners but most don't do much damage before they move on. There are spiders and assassin beetles to ward off the worst, birds and dragonflies to guard the skies. They are all welcome and wanted, all part of a healthy and vibrant ecosystem.

Refocus that spring cleaning energy on your local Horticultural Society. Volunteers are welcome at a variety of society events and programs.

April's featured speakers were Irene Kicak and Veronica Tunzi who will present "Hemp for the Homestead".

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month. \$20/year \$5/meeting

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Measles update

Several more cases of measles exposures have been reported in area health care settings.

The latest are:

Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital

• March 18, 2025 - 7:40 p.m. to 9:47 p.m.

St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital - Emergency Department

• March 17, 2025 - 6:47 a.m. to 10:16 a.m.

• March 19, 2025 - 7:40 a.m. to 11:40 a.m.

• March 21, 2025 at 10:20 p.m. to March 22, 2025 at 4:20 a.m.

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital- Diagnostic Imaging Department

• March 11, 2025 - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

If you were present at these locations during these timeframes, were born in 1970 or later, and are not up to date with your vaccinations, please call public health at 1-800-922-0096. This includes those who were only present briefly as measles is highly contagious and can linger in the air for up to two hours.

In related news, Ontario health officials have confirmed the source of the measles outbreak is a religious gathering that took place in New Brunswick last fall. The latest report from Public Health Ontario, released March 20, says Southwestern Public Health has seen 223 confirmed measles cases since last October, with another 111 cases in Grand Erie.

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Moore's Seeds relocates to Tillsonburg

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A century-old family seed business has found a new home in Tillsonburg.

Moore's Seeds, which started in 1916 as Ralph Moore & Sons as a dairy and vegetable farm in Norwich, has relocated to Bell Mill Side Road on the outskirts of Tillsonburg. The company has built a reputation for producing quality bird seed.

VanMeer Farms is the new owner of Moore's Seeds. This company was started in 1983 by George and Willy Vermeersch with one farm west of Tillsonburg. The operation continued to grow and expand, eventually purchasing the Gilvesy property across from TRW and expanding the grain elevator operation on that property.

Ralph Moore & Sons was purchased by the Wilson family in 2009 and moved from Norwich to Otterville. The Vermeersch family became aware the operation was for sale.

"VanMeer Farms was looking for a way to diversify," said Andrea Thoonen, who operates the company with her father Greg Vermeersch and brother Colin Vermeersch.

They purchased the company last year and started construction on a new 36,000-square-foot facility adjacent to their elevator on Bell Mill Side Road. The name was also changed to Moore's Seeds.

"It fit nicely with what we were doing," Andrea said. "We were knowledgeable in growing grains and thought it would tie in."

"It fit into our wheelhouse of crops," Greg added.

The new facility will house a processing line to clean, mix and package bird seed. It will also feature a large retail showroom to sell bird-related supplies such as feeders and accessories. Twelve bins adjacent to the building will hold large quantities of the most popular seeds for mixing. The company came with a diverse mix of 200 different products. These range from caged bird mixtures to pigeon and outdoor bird seed, plus accessories. Moore's Seeds products are sold across Canada in retailers ranging from small specialty shops to Wal-Mart. The products are also shipped internationally around the world.

VanMeer Farms has been growing millet since 2023 and planning is underway to investigate which other components



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

VanMeer Farms is the new owner of Moore's Seeds. Originally based in Norwich, Moore's has been a family-operated company throughout its 100-plus year history and produces a variety of bird seeds. A new processing facility and retail showroom will be opening on Bell Mill Side Road.

of bird seed can be grown local.

"There's a lot of opportunities to grow as many different crops as we can," Colin said.

For many years, spray millet heads were cut by hand with a pair of scissors. The Wilsons developed a single-row harvester. Greg said they are adept at manufacturing their own equipment and millet harvester 2.0 is under construction. One of the issues with cutting the heads was the stems were transported to the sorting line and then had to be disposed of. The new harvester will see the millet sorted in the field and the stems left in the fields. Harvested millet is then stored in either apple bins or bulk tobacco kiln bins until ready for processing.

Other kinds of millet are harvested with a grain head on the combine.

One emphasis that will be maintained is Moore's reputation for good, clean seed. The company will be operating with the slogan "From seed to feed" as it promotes its lines. The Vermeerschs are exploring the possibility of adding to the company's product lines with the closing of Peavey Mart.

Greg said one of the goals is to create a destination people will travel to for purchasing seed and supplies. The company currently has seven employees, with hopes to add more.

The retail store is scheduled to open in early April and a grand opening will follow.

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OPP investigating stolen vehicle

Oxford OPP are investigating after a vehicle was taken on March 19 in the Town of Norwich.

At approximately 2 p.m., members of the Oxford County OPP were dispatched to a residence on Otterville Road, for a report of another stolen vehicle.

It was determined that an unknown individual(s) entered the property during the overnight hours and proceed to steal a grey 2006, GMC Sierra

pickup truck.

The investigation is continuing.

If you have any information that may be helpful, please call the Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), where you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2000.

OPP warning residents about online fraud after social media scam

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is investigating a fraud after a local resident reported financial loss from an online transaction.

On March 17, 2025, police received a report from a victim who had sent an e-transfer to purchase an appliance advertised on Facebook Marketplace. It was later discovered that the seller's account had been compromised, and the sale was fraudulent.

Investigators have identified additional victims linked to this scam. The investigation remains ongoing.

The OPP reminds the public to exercise caution when making online purchases:

- Verify the seller's identity by contacting them through trusted means.

- Meet in a safe, public location such as a police detachment parking lot.
- Avoid e-transfers to unknown parties and use secure payment options.
- Be alert for red flags, including high-pressure tactics and deals that seem too good to be true.

Anyone with information related to this investigation is asked to contact the Brant County OPP at 1-888-310-1122. To remain anonymous, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or submit a tip online at <https://www.crimestoppersbb.com/>.

Fraud Prevention Month is a reminder to stay vigilant against scams. If something doesn't feel right-stop and verify before you pay.

Tillsonburg man arrested in investigation

After a two-month investigation by the Aylmer Police Service Criminal Investigations Unit and uniform patrol officers, a 28-year-old Tillsonburg man has been arrested and charged with luring a person

under the age of 16 and invitation to sexual touching with a person under 16. The interactions began through the social media platform Snapchat. The male has been held in custody for a court appearance.

OPP warning residents about sim swap scams

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is warning residents about SIM swap scams, a growing form of fraud that allows criminals to gain control of a victim's phone number and access their personal accounts.

How the scam works:

Fraudsters gather personal information through phishing, social media, or data breaches. They then contact a mobile provider, impersonating the victim, and request a SIM card transfer to a new device. Once the switch is complete, the scammer can intercept two-factor authentication codes, reset passwords, and access banking, email, and social media accounts.

Warning signs:

- Your phone unexpectedly loses service or

displays "No Signal."

- You receive alerts about password resets you didn't request.
- You are locked out of email, banking, or social media accounts.

How to protect yourself:

- Use app-based two-factor authentication instead of text messages.
- Set up a PIN or security password with your mobile provider.
- Never share personal details over text, email, or phone.
- Monitor your accounts for unusual activity.

If your phone suddenly stops working or you suspect fraud, contact your mobile provider immediately and secure your accounts. Report any incidents to police at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at <https://www.crimestoppersbb.com/>.

Fraud text scam alert

Cybercriminals are ramping up text-based scams to steal personal and banking information. This tactic, known as "smishing", a combination of "SMS" (short message service) and phishing, relies on deceptive text messages to trick recipients into clicking malicious links or calling fraudulent numbers.

Smishing messages often appear to come from financial institutions, courier companies, online retailers or government agencies. Clicking on these links can lead to identity theft, financial fraud or malware being installed on your device.

In 2024, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) received almost 9,500 reports of identity fraud and over 3,900 reports of personal information theft.

How to Protect Yourself from Smishing Scams:

- Do not click on links, reply to messages or call numbers from unknown senders.
- Report suspicious texts by forwarding them to

7726 (SPAM).

- Delete all suspicious messages immediately.
- Keep your smartphone secure by updating your operating system and security software.
- Use multi-factor authentication for banking, social media and other sensitive accounts.
- Verify any unexpected text messages by checking official websites or contacting organizations directly.
- If you are a victim of smishing frauds, ensure to review the CAFC guide on What to do if you're a victim of fraud.

For more information on fraud prevention, visit opp.ca and sfo.opp.ca.

If you suspect fraudulent activity or have been a victim of fraud, report it immediately to your local police and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or online via the Fraud Reporting System.

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MEGABike coming to Tillsonburg in May

The Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) MEGABike will make one stop in Oxford County, hitting the streets of Tillsonburg on Wednesday, May 28.

MEGABike offers a unique, fun, and easy opportunity for businesses and companies to encourage employee engagement and team building, while raising funds to support young people in their community through free mentorship programs in Oxford County. MEGABike is a 30-seat bike with one seat assigned to the professional driver leaving space for 29 team members to 'Pedal for Potential.' It functions from 'pedal-power,' so a minimum 15 riders is required to get the MEGABike moving!

"We are thrilled to bring the BBBS MEGABike to Oxford County," says Manager of Communications, Liz Wismer-Van Meer. "This is the first-time we have hosted MEGABike and when looking at locations to hold the event, Tillsonburg was our immediate thought."

The agency has seen a steady increase of young people enrolling in our Tillsonburg programs over the past several years.

"In 2024, BBBSOC served 86 children in Tillsonburg; in the first three months of 2025 we have already supported over 50 youth," Wismer-VanMeer said." Additionally, there are 30 young people currently on our waitlist, waiting to be matched with a mentor"

Despite the growing need, BBBS does not receive on-going government or core funding to support these life-changing services. The cost to sustain programs in Tillsonburg ranges from \$100,000 - \$150,000 per year, depending on the number of children we serve.

"Our goal is raise \$50,000 through our MEGABike event, directly benefitting the young people of Tillsonburg and



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Big Brothers Big Sisters MEGABike will be coming to Tillsonburg as a fundraiser for the organization. Pictured here in North Simcoe County, the bike is used as a fundraiser by people paying to ride on it.

creating a brighter future for the entire community," she said.

There are three levels of sponsorship, all of which include a full-bike (29 team members) or half bike (up to 14). MEGABike, teams will meet at Indigo Lounge and start with warm-up activities before riding. The pre-determined

route will take teams through a portion of Tillsonburg near Indigo Lounge. The ride itself will take approximately 20-30 minutes, which means from check-in, to warm-up, ride, and finish, the team will be out of the office for an hour or so. Each team will also receive team photos and Go-Pro footage of their ride. Time

slots are one-hour beginning at 9 a.m. with the final ride beginning at 4 p.m..

For more information on sponsorship and registration visit oxford.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/event/megabike/ or contact Fund Development Manager, Nicole Killaire at: 519.485.1801 | nicole.killaire@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca.

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Glendale robotics team excels in rookie year

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A new Glendale High School team is embracing the future.

The robotics team was started last fall by English teacher Dana Roberts, and has quickly proven its mettle, winning its district at a weekend competition in Windsor. The team also received the Rookie All-Star award and was chosen for the #1 Alliance team by its peers.

"This is an incredible accomplishment for our new team," Roberts said.

Glendale has other technology courses - construction, automotive and computer - but not robotics. Roberts initially had to convince the school to compete in robotics, and knew she would need support from the community. She had experience mentoring a robotics team at another school and saw the value of it.

"It is amazing to see the skills and confidence the students build while being part of this team," Roberts said. "This is something special, and I wanted to give students the opportunity to have this experience."

She reached out to the business community and Martinrea embraced her concept. The local automotive manufacturer had been at Glendale's career day. Martinrea engineering supervisor Scott Burdick enjoys working with the students - the company also has university students doing placements - and wanted to help. He also saw potential to get students excited about the trades and robotics.

Burdick talked to J/E Bearing and Machine, which agreed to supply some of the parts for the robot and make a financial contribution towards the team.

The first competition, the Oxford Invitational in November, involved students building a robot from Lego. Students were judged on robotics, the business case for their robot and presentation. Glendale took gold in that competition.

Provincial high school robotic competitors have a different theme every year. There are no details released until Jan. 6. The robot has to be built to perform certain tasks and design teams earn points for the design and ability to complete tasks.

"They only give you a couple of months to get your design going," Roberts said. "That's why it's important to have a strong partner."

Burdick started by ordering parts for the robot, but found temporary unavailability standing in his way. Martinrea staff came to the rescue, manufacturing the needed parts.

"They enjoy kicking in, it's a good thing," he said.

Team members Zach MacRae and Matthew DeVos explained there is an underwater theme to this year's competition. The robot is competing in a reefscape, and has to pick up a piece of coral (4-inch PVC pipe) and put it on reefs, or racks, of varying heights. It also has to pick up algae (an exercise ball) and deposit it in a hole. Once it's through the hole, a person deposits the ball in a basket.

Extra points are scored at the end if the robot can drive to cages at the end and lift



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Members of the Glendale robotic team were hard at work last week preparing their robot for a competition in Windsor last weekend. Left to right are: Zach MacRae, Ellis Cole, Matthew DeVos, Julia Drobits, Aleah Phillip and Patience Kongai.

itself off the ground.

The robot is controlled by a gaming controller, but the hitch thrown in is it has to operate in autonomous mode the first 15 seconds without a human driver.

"Also, drivers play defence and you want to prevent competitors from scoring points," Roberts said, adding this is often blocking another robot's path but can't cause it damage.

The first competition in Kitchener outside the county was March 20-22 in Waterloo. Glendale's robot was not completed, it could move forward and backwards, but didn't have the components completed to score points. Other teams kicked in and helped the Glendale students scramble. Roberts explained competitors get points for "gracious professionalism", or helping others.

"What I learned with robotics is everything is to the last second," she said.

Glendale placed 22 of 30 teams, which Roberts called, "amazing for a rookie team without a finished robot."

The modifications made for Kitchener were removed and the robot was ready last week for the competition last weekend in Windsor.

Glendale is facing competition against schools with established robotics programs, and much larger teams. The local team has nine students, who are builders, coders, drivers and cover the business case.

"If we had a bigger team, each of those categories would have a team and leader," Roberts said, adding some teams have 50 members at other schools.

Excitement about the robotic team is already catching on. Roberts has talked to Grade 8 students who will be future Glendale students and there is excitement about it.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Glendale High School robotics team is new this year but has excelled, winning first place at a competition in Windsor, as well as winning other awards. The team works in conjunction with Martinrea.

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Beres takes helm of LPRCA

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg Deputy Mayor Dave Beres is the new chairman of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority.

Beres takes over from Brant County Coun. Robert Chambers, who was chair for a year. Beres has been the Tillsonburg representative on the conservation authority board for 15 years of the 28 he has been on council.

The authority owns 11,000 acres of forest and 800 acres of marsh. Beres said it's vital to maintain those holdings to keep global warming at bay.

"The big thing is about global warming, and with the number of trees we have, it's important to maintain those," he said.

Providing a local example, Beres said there were three flood warnings in 2024 and there aren't any in a typical year.

LPRCA also owns four parks – Back-

us, Deer Creek, Norfolk and Waterford – that host 455 seasonal campers and 8,500 visitors. Revenue from the parks, along with fees and forestry management assists the authority in generating enough revenue to cover 63 per cent of its budget.

The authority also has an extensive tree-planting plan.

"We're just doing our share," Beres said. "Last year we planted 4,500 trees and are continuing to plant trees. We are very fortunate in this part of the province that forest fires aren't a threat. Trees stop erosion and help with fresh air."

He said one of the largest challenges is the 13 dams it owns that are aging.

"These are 50 to 70 years old and we can't afford it on our \$6-million budget," Beres said.

As chair of LPRCA, Beres will sit on the board of Conservation Ontario, the entity that represents the province's 38 conservation authorities.

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Discovering lesser-known aspects of the county's history



OCL BOOK TALK

MATTHEW GRIFFIS
Oxford County Library

library's local history specialist, had not heard the full story before. Becker's presentation reminded me how sometimes the most engaging scholarship comes not from universities or colleges but from the grassroots of community history: our local researchers.

When you want to learn more about your community's past, sometimes the best teacher is the community itself.

Since 2022, the library's Local History Speaker Series has given many local scholars a platform for their work. For example, in 2022 Kathleen Watkin discussed Tillsonburg's incorporation as a town in 1872; in February 2023, Heather Rennalls explored the history of Black settlement in the county; and the following November, Randy Owen examined how JFK's assassination was received across the region, sharing excerpts from local news coverage in his analysis. And last fall, Joan Weston gave a history of tobacco farming in the tri-county area. Some speakers were from local museums or historical societies, others were independent scholars. But all were members of the Oxford community, and their work taught us new ways to appreciate the county's past.

That was at least the Oxford County Library's opinion when it launched its Local History Speaker Series in late 2022. With assistance from the County Archives, the series showcases local speakers whose research examines aspects of Oxford's past, from specific places and people to stories and events that impacted communities county-wide.

The Library's series is just one of several in the area. Many museums, archives, and historical societies offer similar programming. And while the library typically hosts its history speaker events at one of its larger branches, it also streams each one live via Zoom. Past events have attracted virtual attendees from as far away as the southwestern United States. Whether local history is new to you or not, consider attending a local history speaker event near you. These series not only support the work of local scholars but also offer a deeper understanding of our community's valuable past.

Hosted last month by the Tillsonburg Library, the series' latest installment featured speaker Elaine Becker, who gave the history of Woodstock's Burnside Lodge. Run in the 1920s and 30s, the lodge housed hundreds of teenage boys brought here from England to work on area farms. Most entered the Salvation Army-sponsored program to escape hardship back home. Once here, they became an important part of the region's agricultural workforce.

But more compellingly, these young men left their families behind in search of a better life right here in Oxford County. Becker's talk drew a crowd; and for many in the audience, the story of Burnside Lodge was new. Even I, the Tillsonburg

Matthew Griffis is the Digital Literacy and Local History Technician at Oxford County Library's Tillsonburg Branch.

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New exhibit brings fantasy to Station Arts

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Artist Lindsey Liboiron's exhibit "The Living Woods" brings fantasy to the Station Arts Centre.

"To me, it's a look into another world to give you a chance to get out of reality," Liboiron said. "It has a childlike aspect to it, kind of fun."

While fantasy in art may conjure up images of paintings in an abstract or modern fashion, this isn't the case with Liboiron's art.

"I'm mostly a hyper-realistic painter," she said. "It's fantasy with a lot of details to it."

The paintings, which have an accompanying sound element of nature sounds completed by her brother Lucas and are on display until April 25, also have enhanced colours.

With walking trees and fantastical creatures, fans of JRR Tolkien may see elements of their favourite author in the paintings, but this isn't an author that Liboiron read. She did grow up reading fantasy books about fairies. Some of the creatures are also inspired by folk tales from the Czech Republic. She visited the Czech Republic recently with her mother and saw many tree carvings there.

"You find hidden things when exploring," Liboiron said.

All of the creatures in the paintings are tall and thin Liboiron attributed Salvador Dali as an influence.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Artist Lindsey Liboiron stands in front of several of her paintings on display at the Station Arts Centre. Her exhibit runs until April 25.

A native of Hamilton, living in Tillsonburg the past two years, Liboiron has painted her entire life. In high school she decided to pursue art as a career. She has a BA in art and education from Brock University. Liboiron has taught at the university and high school level as well

as instructing painting classes in several locations, including Tillsonburg. She has been part of many juried shows and won awards for her art.

Initially a landscape painter, landscapes and nature are part of "The Living Woods." The design of the paintings starts

with working with ideas on her iPad.

"When I start any painting, it's what creature do I want to make," she said. "In what way can this animal blend with its environment or make it more fantastic."

The paintings are mostly acrylic on canvas, with a few being acrylic on wood.



BUSY TIME FOR FIREFIGHTERS

(AMANDA MCCAREY PHOTO)

It's been a busy couple of weeks for firefighters, who responded to a house fire on Pearl Street - which caused \$15,000 damage - and a fire in the alley behind Chrissy's Catering on March 22 where decking appeared to have caught on fire from a dropped cigarette. Firefighters also responded to an oven fire in the senior's complex on Maple Lane, which was quickly extinguished. There is also an issue in the building as the elevator was damaged and the owners are waiting on a replacement part, which is being custom manufactured on a rush basis.

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Seasonal Ice Cream Shop coming to historic site in Mount Elgin

DEBBIE KASMAN

Tillsonburg Post Correspondent

In February, South-West Oxford Council approved a request from Prouse Transport Limited to “add an eating establishment as a permitted use” to the existing property.

Matt and Katie Prouse, owners of Prouse Transport, will be opening a seasonal ice cream shop called Irv’s Ice Cream Shop on their property located on the north-west corner of Highway 19 and Mount Elgin Road. The shop will serve locally-made Shaw’s ice cream (rotating through 20 of Shaw’s flavours) and will be accessed through a walk-up window.

Matt’s great-grandfather and founder of Prouse Transport, Irvin Prouse, sold ice cream at the Shell Gas Station formerly on the property. Customers would visit the “Booth,” which also sold chips, pop and Silverwood’s ice cream in three flavours: chocolate, vanilla and strawberry.

Irv’s Ice Cream Shop will complement Sara’s Sausage Express, a food truck already located there.

Historical connection to Mount Elgin

The Prouse property was originally owned by Ira Harris (1802 – 1859), a native of New York State, and one of the early settlers of Mount Elgin. Harris bought several hundred acres of land in Mount Elgin after the post office opened in 1851 and following completion of the Plank and Gravel Road, a toll road formed by the Ingersoll and Port Burwell Road Company, which eventually became Highway #19 and is now also called Plank Line.

Harris erected Mount Elgin’s first hotel on the property with frontage on both the Plank and Gravel Road and Mount Elgin Road (called Norwich Street at the time). The January 1852 census recorded Ira Harris as Innkeeper.

Donald Murray was the proprietor of the Mount Elgin Hotel from 1867 to 1871 while Charles F. Huntley was the proprietor of the Mount Elgin Hotel and Stage House from 1870 to 1871. In 1881, Mrs. Anna Huntley was shown as the proprietor of Mount Elgin House. In 1990, F. Gray was shown as the proprietor of a hotel in Mount Elgin.

An advertisement for the Mount Elgin Hotel and Stage House in 1870 shows Charles F. Huntley as the Proprietor. Huntley declared “the best brands of wines, liquors and cigars” were “always on hand,” with “first-class stabling and attentive hostlers,” and “daily stages to Ingersoll and



(CONTRIBUTEDPHOTO)

Irv Prouse.

Port Burwell.” Huntley’s advertisement also declared, “Every attention will be given to the comfort of those calling at this House.”

Since old-time political meetings were held in small hotels, community halls and schools during these years with audiences consisting of electors, not just the speaker’s partisans, it’s possible Ebenezer Vining Bodwell (1827 –

1889), an Ontario businessman and political figure from Mount Elgin, attended the hotel along with his neighbours for political meetings.

Bodwell was elected in 1867 and represented Oxford South in the House of Commons of Canada as a Liberal member in the first Canadian parliament alongside Canada’s first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald (who was a Conservative member). So it’s also possible that Bodwell attended the hotel when Donald Murray was the proprietor to speak to his neighbours in an attempt to garner their vote.

According to Alma Peters, a long-time resident who wrote a local history of Mount Elgin called “Forgotten Footsteps,” the hotel was known during her time as the Mount Elgin House.

Mount Elgin House was later remodelled and turned into a residence in which Dr. S. Morris (1900-1938) resided. Irvin Prouse, Sr. (1938-1967) bought the house from Dr. Morris, the local doctor, in the 1930s.

According to John Prouse (1933 – 2023), Irvin’s son, the house had a woodshed on the north end, which served as a place to store wood to be used for heat. They heated the house with a kitchen stove and a Quebec heater in the front room. The kitchen, dining, and living rooms were along the front of the house and there were four rooms that served as bedrooms at the rear of the house. A small centre room contained a bathtub and the water was heated in a high copper vessel on the kitchen stove. Baths were taken twice a week.

When Irvin C. Prouse and Sons began to grow, the garage to the north of the house was bought from Henry Greason and was used to service and store the growing Prouse truck fleet. The garage was a two-story building with two apartments upstairs.

The original hotel/home was torn down in 1980 and the family discovered that it had been constructed of red clay with straw for binding, which is called “cob” construction.

English cob was traditionally made by mixing the clay-based subsoil with sand, straw and water using oxen to trample it.

The present Prouse’s garage, where the new ice cream shop will be located, was built in 1946, on the site of the old hotel.

Prouse as prominent name

Prouse is a prominent name in Mount Elgin’s history. It first appears in the Dereham Census in 1871. According to family history, as the number of descendants increased throughout the decades, there was a proliferation of Prouse sons and daughters purchasing farm property throughout Dereham, West Oxford and Dorchester Townships and place names such as Prouse’s Corners and Prouse Road began to spring up in Dereham Township.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Shell gas station where ice cream was sold. This gas station sat on the property where Irv's Ice Cream Shop will be located.

In addition to selling ice cream and operating a trucking company (the modern day Prouses), the original Prouse family were farmers in the cheese-making business. In 1896, one of the Prouse Cheese Factories was located on the sixth Concession in Dereham Township. It was located west of the Plank and Gravel Road on the south side of the sixth Concession on what is now known as Prouse Road, just west of the railroad tracks on the way to Dereham Centre.

Ellen Vivian Bodwell Prouse (1897 – 1981), a relative of Ebenezer Vining Bodwell, married Cecil Prouse (1899 – 1990) in 1924. Cecil and Vivian owned Elgin Hall from 1947 to 1965 where Vivian's ancestor, Ebenezer Vining Bodwell, lived

before he was elected to Canada's first parliament. Elgin Hall was demolished in 2023 to make room for the subdivision expansion. The Elgin Hall property on Mount Elgin Road is the site of the proposed new township office.

Irv's Ice Cream Shop will open on the May long week-end from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and will extend into daytime hours throughout July and August. Matt and Katie also have plans for pop up days with longer hours on specific holidays throughout the summer.

* Thank you to Dr. George Emery, professor emeritus, Western University, for his historical contributions for the article. Photos provided by Katie Prouse and Lyle Rooke.

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Tillsonburg Gemini Sandham, Wernham lock up Captains/Veterans hoops MVPs

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Technically, Lucas Sandham's 'vertical' is around 40 inches.

And every bit of that was on display as the Tillsonburg Gemini forward not only earned TVRA South East Captains/Veterans Senior Boys' Basketball MVP honours with a 30-point performance Thursday, March 27 at Woodstock Collegiate Institute, but also elevated in the halftime slam

dunk competition.

Admittedly, Sandham didn't put down as many dunks as he would have preferred, but certainly earned the respect of the crowd with a varied array including two-handed 360 attempts, and even an homage to Vince Carter's between-the-legs classic.

"I warmed up too much," smiled Sandham. "Did all my stuff in warmup."

Style points aside, Sandham also lit up the scoreboard, scoring at least four in

each quarter including two three-point field goals and 14 overall in the fourth as Team Blue (Glendale, Woodstock College Avenue and Ingersoll DCI) made a late run at Team White (host Woodstock CI, Woodstock Huron Park and Lord Dorchester), before falling 102-94 in a high-octane offensively-dominated affair.

Gemini teammate Jacob Mogg added five points and Cohen Schott two. Woodstock CI's Will Halward led Team White, also with 30 points.

Sandham, who plans on attending Conestoga College and trying out for the basketball team there next year, says it was fun to play with friends from other teams.

"It was a blast," agreed Schott. "It was a fun game out there."

Gavin Wernham made it a Gemini sweep of MVP honours in the junior game, knocking down nine points including one trey as his version of the White squad (Glendale, Huron Park, College Avenue and Dorchester) dropped a 55-46 decision to Junior Blue (Woodstock St. Mary's, Ingersoll DCI, WCI and Dorchester).

"Shots weren't there, but the defence was working," Wernham summed up of an enjoyable and well-supported Captains/Veterans experience featuring players, officials and fans from around the league.

"Made it better by this whole (basketball) community."

Gemini teammate Jordan McCormick added a three-point field goal to the White team totals, Kayden Pittao two and eight points overall, with Kypton Lofthouse pacing the Tillsonburg effort with an even



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Gemini Lucas Sandham has his eyes on the prize during the halftime dunk contest. Sandham earned senior Captains/Veterans Blue Team MVP honours with a 30-point performance.

ten points. Overall, the Gemini had had a great season, said Lofthouse, following in the footsteps of his father Chad.

"Didn't end the way we wanted, but this was a fun way to wrap up the season. A good opportunity to play basketball with a great bunch of players."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Gemini forward Kypton Lofthouse (right) dribbles the ball under defensive attention from Woodstock St. Mary's forward Johnny Bertoia.



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Chris Coyle honoured with OFSAA Leadership in School Sport Award



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Chris (left) Coyle shows off his OFSAA Leadership in School ring under the appreciative eye of his greatest supporter, wife Tami.

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

Example and environment both played pivotal roles as Chris Coyle was honoured with an Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) Leadership in School Sport Award during the recent A boys' basketball championship in Woodstock.

"Pretty cool," the Tillsonburg native summed up succinctly. "Very humbling - very special."

The award is presented annually at each OFSAA final to a teacher-coach who has made a significant contribution to the educational athletic program. Recipients exemplify fair play and sportsmanship, while promoting enjoyment, personal growth and educational achievement through school sports.

While honoured as a member of the Woodstock CI Red Devils program, Coyle's athletic roots are anchored firmly within his home community. He played for the Glendale Griffins during his Grade 9 season before amalgamation with the Annandale Marauders created the Gemini program the following school year. In all, Coyle played six high school seasons including a victory

lap, sporting the number 14 his basketball hero David Coulthard had worn. It was an era when the Griffins, and subsequently Gemini, competed at the AAA level, at the time the highest in the province.

"The best of the best," said Coyle, who gained an intimate firsthand knowledge of Tillsonburg's tradition of basketball excellence. "Being part of that program, I grew up watching."

Beyond WOSAA and OFSAA appearances and medals, fun facts about his playing career include a perfect 11-11 MVP shooting performance during the inaugural captains/veterans game (with one free throw for 23 points) and a season with Memorial University of Newfoundland at St. John's, where he led the Atlantic Universities Athletics Association (AUAA) in free throw percentage, and was second overall in Canada.

"No one was guarding me," he laughed. "I was all right."

Coyle played for his late father Wayne all but one high school season, a person who remains an inspiration to this day.

"Dad was the largest influence in my life in every way, especially in basketball," Chris credited. "He always has been my go-to guy for information.

"Some of what we still do is what he



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Tillsonburg native Chris Coyle, right, pictured with nominator Eric Molinaro, left, was honoured with an Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) Leadership in School Sport Award during the recent A boys' basketball championship in Woodstock.

taught me."

The elder Coyle was a member of a boys' basketball coaching partnership including Dave Quarrie and Brian O'Rourke. Their decades of commitment in building and maintaining a consistently competitive program stayed with Chris throughout his working and coaching life.

"You have to put in the time and effort, have a plan," he explained, supporting athletes in being successful both on the court and off. "A little bit of that rubbed off on me."

Coyle began his teaching career with nine years in the elementary system before joining Woodstock CI in 1998/99. He came in with the intention of contributing to an existing program built by individuals including Peter Ewing, Lance Elliott and Dave Alexander.

"The place had some basketball pedigree, I just brought my own twist," said Coyle. "It was a nice combination of what I learned in Tillsonburg and saw here."

His initial coaching experience mirrored the process of step-by-step program building. Coyle's first group of players won one game in Grade 9, 'a couple' in Grade 10.

"By Grade 13, they were one of the best teams around."

In all, Coyle has nine OFSAA appearances on his coaching resume - to date - which naturally rank as highlights.

"Some girls, some boys," he said. "I was lucky enough to coach both.

"Getting there is such a big goal," Coyle continued. "It's the best in the

province, right? And such an awesome experience for everyone."

Coyle also has four provincial medals, an antique bronze, two bronze and a silver from this year's event in Woodstock. The OFSAA leadership award will fit nicely into his collection, representing what he appreciatively views as recognition for lifetime achievement.

In gratefully accepting it, Coyle wished to thank OFSAA A convenor and nominator Eric Molinaro, given both the direct relationship between hosting OFSAA and in general, recognizing a local individual for the leadership award, as well as their long-standing coaching relationship. Coyle also mentioned previous fellow WCI program coaches Jag Rai, Brian Does and Christian Madamba, as well as the contemporary Jason Poole, previously an elite-level soccer coach who has developed into an excellent Red Devils basketball bench boss within the WCI program. And last, but certainly not least, Chris expressed appreciation for his wife Tami's support, without which "none of this would be possible."

In summing up, Coyle didn't focus on winning, medals or awards related to a program he helped form, shape and develop, rather a shared coaching journey, 'all the little things' that happen in practices, games or on the road.

"It's about the people, relationships with kids and other coaches," he concluded "That's the fun of it, build a program and watch the kids flow through Grade 9 to 12 and create some memories along the way."

We want to hear from our community!

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CLUB OXFORD HOCKEY



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Fody's was the winner of the A Division Final in Club Oxford, winning 3-0 against ReMax Realty. Left to right are: (Back) Chris Fody, Brandon Sawatzky, Charles Hyland, Mike Mudford, Marty Friedrich, Rob Smith, Chris Sanders, Kevin Verbruggen (Front) Mason Brewer, Blake Ash, Tommy Lee, Shane Balcomb, Kevin VanKooten, and Jeremy Hilliar

Tillsonburg Glass was the winner of the B Division Championship, winning 3-0 against Carquest. Left to right are: (back row) Brian Beaumont, Darryl Price, Kris King, Jeff Prouse, Jordan Roesch, Gaige Benish, John Morrison, (front row) Jake Patterson, Brendan Soares, Tom Huberty, Kyle Winters, and Parker Terryberry. Absent were: Stephen Schafer and Kevin Mills

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

March 16

Fody's 3, ReMax 1

Fody's looked a bit caught off guard by ReMax's quick jump, but they dialed it back in to get their speed and offense going. Some solid chances throughout the game. ReMax had the early start and matched up well all game. They didn't get as many chances later in the game, which led to some long passes and quick breaks.

Marty Friedrich and Kevin VanKooten had goals for Fody's. Landon Thibert had a goal for ReMax.

Fody's leads series 1-0.

Glass 3, Carquest 1

Glass jumped out to a good lead and their defensive effort kept Carquest from the scoresheet. Penalties could lead to trouble though. Carquest did get some chances, but could have connected on the powerplay more. It's tight checking, so they'll need to take advantage of those chances.

Brendan Soares had 2 goals for Glass. Evan Prouse had a goal for Carquest.

Glass leads series 1-0.

Source 8, Airmount 2

Source found scoring from different areas. They had a strong presence in front and it made for a hectic time in the crease. Airmount couldn't get much sustained pressure, though they did have some good breakouts to get chances.

Mike Hedberg had a hat trick for Source. Trevor Bradfield had a goal for Airmount.

Source leads series 1-0.

March 19

Fody's 5, ReMax 1

Fody's had a lot of jump in this one. It seemed they had a solid rush on every possession. They were solid in net and defensively to secure the win. ReMax couldn't get things going in front. They had some good breakouts, but had problems keeping control in the offensive zone.

Brandon Sawatzky had 3 assists for Fody's. Ryan Dayman had a goal for ReMax.

Fody's leads series 2-0.

Glass 6, Carquest 4

An intense game. Glass was able to pull one out in the end as they seemed to find more energy in the second. Not the best defensive game, but they were able to get the scoring they needed. Carquest was able to match Glass all game. They found some scoring with new lines and were dangerous every shift. A tough loss after a good effort.

Kyle Winters had 3 points for Glass. Darrick French had 3 points for Carquest.

Glass leads series 2-0.

Airmount 4, Source 2

Airmount was able to keep things rolling with a short bench. They found a rhythm with their game tonight that kept them with chances all game. Source had some solid playmaking, especially in the neutral zone. Which led to some good chances. They couldn't get the rebounds or it may have changed the outcome.

Zach Alton had 3 points for Airmount. Nate Bisschop had a goal for Source.

Series tied at 1.

Club Oxford winding down for the year

March 23

Fody's 2, ReMax 1 OT

Fody's was able to pull out a win in overtime after battling all night. A good all-around game that kept ReMax at bay while getting their own chances. ReMax did well to keep Fody's from breaking out offensively. They made a valiant effort, but just couldn't get through a tough Fody's defence.

Shane Balcomb had two goals for Fody's. Jordan Kobayashi had a goal for ReMax.

Fody's wins series 3-0.

Glass 5, Carquest 0

Glass played a near perfect game. They took advantage of an early powerplay to set the tone and held Carquest from getting shots on net all night. Carquest just couldn't find their rhythm in this one. They struggled in the offensive zone, mustering few scoring chances. A tough way to end the season.

Brendan Soares had a hat trick for Glass.

Glass wins series 3-0.

Source 3, Airmount 2

Source was able to play their game and get some good chances. They didn't let Airmount

get much momentum and were able to shut them down late. Airmount had some better chances in the second. They had some scrambling times with Source in front of the net, but did well to keep too many rebound from happening.

Mitch Wass had two points for Source. Derek Buchner had a goal for Airmount.

Source leads series 2-1.

March 26

Airmount 3, Source 1

Airmount found some speed and had a lot of dangerous rushes. They also made the Source defence run around a bit, which made them make some mistakes. Source wasn't ready for the Airmount breakouts and gave up some odd man rushes. They'll need to buckle down to keep Airmount at bay in Game 5.

Brent Beekman had three points for Airmount. Jamie Haines had a goal for Source.

Series tied 2-2.

A DIVISION PLAYOFFS	A DIVISION FINAL
FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE (1) VS	
AGROSPRAY (4)	
FODY'S WINS SERIES 3-0	FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE (1) VS
	REMAX REALTY (3)
DISTINCT EXTERIORS (2) VS	FODY'S WINS SERIES 3-0
REMAX REALTY (3)	
REMAX WINS SERIES 3-1	

B DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP	B CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL
TILLSONBURG GLASS (1) VS	
ROYAL LEPAGE (4)	
GLASS WINS SERIES 3-1	TILLSONBURG GLASS (1) VS
	CARQUEST (2)
CARQUEST AUTOMOTIVE (2) VS	GLASS WINS SERIES 3-0
CALIBRATED PRECISION (3)	
CARQUEST WINS SERIES 3-0	

B DIVISION CONSOLATION	B CONSOLATION FINAL
SOURCE FOR SPORTS (5) VS	
B-LINE TRUCKING (8)	
SOURCE WINS SERIES 3-1	SOURCE FOR SPORTS (5)
	AIRMOUNT FARMS (7)
RND CONSTRUCTION (6) VS	SERIES TIED 2-2
AIRMOUNT FARMS (7)	
AIRMOUNT WINS SERIES 3-0	

Curling club wraps up 70th anniversary season



**ON
THE
BROOM**

NORA PETERS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

And that's a wrap!! The final week of curling came to an end last Saturday after all leagues celebrated their season winners and trophy champions along with a final Swing and Scavenger Hunt event on Saturday. On behalf of the whole club, thank you to all the league convenors who have given their time, energy, creativity and endless patience to organize leagues.

Monday Night Mixed was the first league to recognize their winners. Championship trophy winners were Les and Cathy Kovacs along with Terry (Gump) and Cindy Hildebrant. Honoured as the top scorers by position this season were: Skip, Les Kovacs; Vice, Cathy Kovacs; Second, Gary Tutt and Lead, Patti Tutt. Forty curlers showed up for the final night to experience dinner, curling and socializing to cap their season off.

The Senior Men culminated their season playing a double knockout bonspiel of 2 on 2 like Scotch Doubles with 36 curlers partic-

ipating. Winners of the Tillsonburg Seniors Lang Memorial Cup were Les Kovacs and Steve Hartford. The Consolation round went to Al Garon and John Lamont. The day also included final donations to the Helping Hand Food Bank bringing the total for the season to \$1900!

On Friday, our seniors hosted the last Interclub bonspiel with teams from Simcoe, Ingersoll and Aylmer participating. Each club sends two teams and the overall trophy champions are awarded on the points accumulated in the four bonspiels held in each club. Simcoe and Tillsonburg tied for top honours when Tillsonburg outscored Simcoe in the final event. Thirteen local curlers were part of the team over the season.

The ladies section finished the year with their usual morning coffee, an 8-end game and a wonderful potluck lunch provided by the curlers. The three games on the ice were all tightly contested, coming down to the eighth end to decide the winners. Sponsor Linda Fenn of Tillsonburg Garden Gate was on hand to award the trophy to top point getters for this draw to Helen Cull, Nora Peter, Susan Howe and Gail Harris. Runners-up were Diana Blake, Anne Omerod, Patti Tutt and Diane Burgess. Garden Gate also brought the winners pots of lovely spring flowers. It was a great end to a good season. Thanks to our local business sponsors and our hard-working convenors.

For the men's league, the tightest battle on the final night came between the two teams on the losing side of the draw trying to avoid

being the team to wash the dishes. This contest came down to the final end with Dave Ireland's team defeating the Walt Kleer team, who by the loss earned the "right" to dish duty. In the championship game the Les Peter foursome ceded to the Gasparetto rink in 5 one-sided ends. With no hope of winning, the Peter rink opted to get off the ice and choose the juiciest steaks for themselves and make sure they got their fair share of Paul Belcher's signature baked beans for supper! Taking the Men's Club Championship, was skip Ron Gasparetto, vice Sid Abram, second Marty Petryshen and lead Gary Tutt. Over the draw, the team had outscored their opponents 33-8 and took 16 of their 19 played ends to win a well-deserved championship. Frank Vandeslyke and his team of Chad Lamoure, Chris Buchner and Dave Corner took the consolation win. Thanks to Al and Dave for their work all season and newsy weekly updates.

The final Friday night for the Choose Your Own (Rec) League had all 12 teams on the ice to decide their division winners. In the "A" Division Domino's Pizza final, Rockin' the Sheets defeated the Shots and Shooters to claim the trophy. In the Copper Mug "B" Division, the Hogline Hooligans claimed the win over Boss Hogs. All teams enjoyed pizza and wings from our sponsors off ice along with some fun socializing after the games.

The last club event of the season had a raucous party atmosphere. Starting with the Swing part of the day at Tillsonview Fairways, 12 teams bravely weathered the elements to earn a winning score. Diane and

Walt Kleer along with Ron and Cindy Gasparetto came out in first place with the best score for the selected holes. The teams continued on to the club where 14 teams headed out on the second part of the day on the Scavenger Hunt. With a list of clues in hand, teams criss-crossed the town visiting various local businesses and special locations to answer clues and challenges. The organizers had teams visiting sponsors like Sobey's where the 70th anniversary challenge was to purchase exactly 70 cents worth of grapes. We visited Domino's Pizza to get pictures from 1960, wore a cheesy hat at Two Girls and a Cheese, located historical notes at the Station Arts and Annandale House, disturbed people in the library locating a specific book on curling and stopped traffic to recreate the Abbey Road album cover. Thanks to all the businesses and townspeople who were so supportive of teams trying to meet their challenges. Teams returned to the club for a noisy wrap up of the day's events by the committee of Tracy and Larry Beattie, Bev Cadotte and Cindy Duyvejonck. Kevin and Karen Judd with Terry and Cindy Hildebrant won first prize, with second place going to the team of Marianne Murphy, Mona Pieters, Stephanie McGregor and Susan Wavell. Sobey's donated a ham, turkey and a gift card won by Al Robinson, Shirley Becht and Kelly Beard respectively.

Thanks to all the organizers, sponsors and participants it was a great way to finish the 70th year of the club.

Curling rocks!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Mixed trophy winners at the Tillsonburg Curling Club were, left to right, Kari Silventoinen (for Terry Hildebrant), Cathy Kovacs, Les Kovacs, Brenda Jones (for Cindy Hildebrant).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Domino's A Division winners, were left to right: Brent Rohrer, Jen Cadman, Mandy Vickers, and Tyler Danbrook.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Copper Mug B Division Champ were, left to right, Nick Wilson, Chris Parker, Jeff Cadotte, Andrew Dawson.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The ladies division wound up with the team of, left to right, Susan Howe, Gail Harris, Linda (Sponsor from Garden Gate), Nora Peter, Helen Cull, being the top team with the top four highest scores in the final draw of the season.

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Curling club wraps up 70th anniversary season

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The consolation winners in the ladies' division, were left to right, Linda (Sponsor from Garden Gate), Diana Blake, Anne Omerod, Patti Tutt, Diane Burgess.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The men's league champions were left to right: Sid Abram - vice, Gary Tutt - lead, Marty Petryshen - second and Ron Gasparetto - skip.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tillsonburg finished the year tied with Simcoe for the Interclub Championship by placing ahead of Simcoe in the final bonspiel of the season. The Interclub circuit consists of Ingersoll, Aylmer, Simcoe and Tillsonburg. Left to right are: Grant Sumler, Al Robinson, Wade Jones, David Sandor, Ches Sulkowski, Dwayne Daniel, Kari Silventoinen, Dennis McCarroll, Bernie Joostens, Brian Jameison, and Les Kovacs. Absent from photo were Peter Burns and Ken Patterson.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The seniors curling league wrapped up their season on March 26 with a double knockout bonspiel of 2 on 2 playing rules similar to Scotch doubles. The winners of the 'Tillsonburg Seniors Lang Memorial Cup' were Les Kovacs and Steven Hartford. The consolation round was won by Al Garon and John Lamont.

Tillsonburg skaters medal at provincials



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Several members of the Tillsonburg Skating Club competed in the recent provincials. Left to right are: (front row) Madylinn Lumley, Grace McCutchen, Elizabeth Heleniak, Milla Leighfield, (back row) Claire McCutchen, Mackenzie Hutchinson, Scott Boyd, Leilah Ardy and Morgan Condie. Boyd and Claire McCutchen won medals at the event.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Two Tillsonburg skaters earned gold medals at the recent provincial competition.

Claire McCutchen and Scott Boyd were the medal winners in a contingent of nine Tillsonburg Skating Club competitors at the 2025 Skate Ontario Provincials, held March 21-23 in Stratford.

McCutchen, 16, has been skating for 12 years, starting in CanSkate when she was four years-old. This is her third time at the provincials. Last year McCutchen was sixth in Star 6 Women.

She competed in Star 8 Women's division, for those up to 18. She has been working since June on her number, put together with coaches Penny Jelsma and Erin Scherrer. Her competition route consisted of three combination spins, six jumps and a choreography sequence lasting three minutes.

After qualifying, she was sitting in sixth and had to skate again.

"I skated clean, perfect, and all my jumps

landed," she said.

McCutchen plans on skating until she graduates high school and hopes to complete her Star 9, Star 10 and freeskate gold. She may coach at some point in the future.

"I'm not really sure yet," she said to the coaching question. "I'm going to take all my elements to be a coach."

Boyd, 16, has been skating since he was eight and quickly moved up through the levels to Star 10. He finished with a gold in Star 9 men and silver in Star 10 men.

"Things were really good," he said of his performance that day. "I was trying hard to get my double axle (jump). I've been working on that all season."

Boyd said both skates went well on the day of the competition, finishing with a clean program and the spins and jumps he has been working on coming off well.

Gold is next for Boyd.

"I want to try to get my double-axle consistent and maybe try to get some triples," he said.

Boyd is also considering coaching at some point in the future.

SKATING THROUGH THE DECADES

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)

Tillsonburg Skating Club held its showcase Music Through the Decades on March 29, thrilling the crowd with jumps, spins, incredible skating and young skaters in their first season on skates. Besides young skaters, a perennial favourite is also the number involving parents.



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(JOHN BECHT PHOTO)

The South Oxford Storm U10A defeated Mt. Bridges 3-2 to win OMHA Shamrock League championship with a 5-2 win on March 27.

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Budget Blinds brings blind selection to the customer's home

Budget Blinds of St. Thomas and Woodstock offers a unique showroom on wheels that brings blind selection to the consumer's home.

Owned by Tomas Acha and Lourdes Cuevas, the franchise opened on Jan. 1, 2023. Saying it's the largest window coverings company in North America, Acha said the company model is to carry the store to the customer's home.

"It's better and lets the customer see all the fabrics and how they react in their surroundings," he said. "What happens to many customers is they go to the store and take it home and it's not the same as it was in the store. The surroundings are different than what is in the store."

The couple have a franchise territory that surrounds London and includes Tillsonburg. Acha was born in Canada but grew up in Mexico. Cuevas is from Mexico. They moved to Canada to purchase the franchise.

Budget Blinds carries a large selection of blinds, motorized blinds, draperies, shutters, rollers and exterior roller shades.

The franchise purchases from some of the largest vendors in the business. The warranty is five years and is a comprehensive, no questions asked replacement. The customer only needs to pay for the installation and freight for the replacement.

"Anything that happens to your blind in the future we will take care of you," he said.

Acha said service sets the company apart from its competitors. In-home measurement of the blinds, ordering and installation are all part of the service.

"We do the whole thing so you don't have to worry," he said. "Even afterwards, we take care of you, any troubleshooting, whatever."

There are hundreds of different colours and styles of blinds.

"Our van is completely packed and we carry the whole store to your home," he said.

Budget Blinds of Woodstock and St. Thomas is also a member of the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce.

The company can be reached at 519-532-8290.




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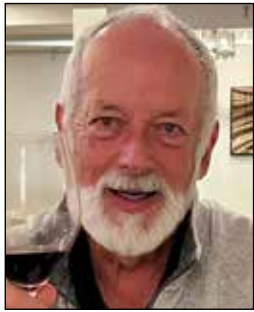


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Highlights of visiting small but mighty Gibraltar



**OH,
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PLACES
WE'LL
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

You might think that a highlight of visiting the unique destination that is Gibraltar would be your first sighting of “The Rock”, or glimpsing Africa only about 15 kilometers away across the straits, or meeting the famous Gibraltar monkeys that inhabit the nature preserve that covers two-thirds of the peninsula.

And yes, all of the above. But the most entertaining experience for me may have been a ridiculous game of musical chairs carried out by a local resident named Michael.

Let me explain. We were nearing the end of a wonderful, three-week stay in Spain’s Costa del Sol. More of this in coming weeks. But for one day, we left Spain and found ourselves instantly in Great Britain.

Everything on Gibraltar is British. Except, of course, for the 15,000 Spaniards who clear customs twice a day to work on The Rock. As a long-time Anglophile, it was a treat to be in a community with red telephone booths and post boxes, a well-stocked Marks and Spencer, and British pubs galore.

We strolled up a side street and found a tiny pub named The Aragon Bar, named for one of Henry VIII’s wives. The pub seated no more than a dozen people, max, plus four or five at the bar. When we walked in, there was no obvious place for us, but the barmaid immediately

pointed to a guy sitting on the bench, and said, “Michael, please move,” directing him to a table set for one.

Michael moved. Our table was cleaned, and we were nestled into the corner. I ordered a pint and steak and onion pie. It was probably the only day in three weeks when I did not eat paella.

Soon after our arrival, another couple popped their heads in. The scene was repeated. “Michael, please move.” As the servers added a chair to that vacated table, Michael moved to a stool at the bar, being careful to take his pint with him.

Someone else approached the bar. Michael, by now having figured out his fate, moved toward the tiny kitchen, and sat down at the back table already occupied by a woman who appeared to be the owner. And eventually, he sidled out of the bar completely, probably returning an hour or two later when these darned interlopers had cleared out and he could reclaim his usual perch. Meanwhile, it being St. Patrick’s Day, I had my picture taken with the Irish barmaid.

For me, these are the quirky moments that make travel memorable.

Of course, there is a lot more to Gibraltar than a tiny British pub. Gibraltar is officially a “British Overseas Territory”, and it feels like one of the last remnants of the British Empire. It has been ruled by various conquerors over the centuries – the Moors in the Middle Ages, then Spain (which still wants it back) and finally, since 1713, the British. Tangible evidence of all of those eras is still found on The Rock.

One of the highlights of the visit is indeed simply seeing The Rock – for visitors who have travelled near sea level along the coast of Spain, the soaring, 426-metre limestone outcropping is an impressive sight.

And then, venturing at least half-way up The Rock into the Gibraltar Nature Reserve adds to the adventure. That’s where you encounter the monkeys – more properly, Barbary macaques –



(PHOTOS BY PAUL KNOWLES)

The light show in St. Michael's Cave.

who occupy the reserve. Our guide pointed out that the monkeys own two square kilometres of Gibraltar; humans, only one square kilometre.

There is no doubt that the monkeys are wild animals, although our guide admitted they are fed by park staff, not because they need supplements to their natural diet in the reserve, but to attract them to areas visited by the paying tourists. Which explains why we spotted two of the animals visiting the gift shop!

That shop is at the entrance to one of the other highlights on Gibraltar – St. Michael’s Cave, an impressive limestone cavern, where your visit will include a rather spectacular light show.

Gibraltar is not big – permanent population is somewhere around 35,000. But it has grown in size, when it comes to land area, because much of the city, including multiple high-rises, is now built on land reclaimed from the sea. And that trend is highly unpopular with the Spanish, who have watched what they see as British “squatters” move ever closer.

The Rock is much more important than its

population or land mass might suggest, because it controls the link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, the route for about 130,000 ships annually, the majority, merchant vessels. From high on The Rock, you can see many ships at anchor, waiting to enter the harbour for refuelling.

So important, yes. Disputed, yes. Famous, yes – including as the location for the weddings of John and Yoko, Rod Stewart, Sean Connery and others. But still a smallish town, and therefore, safe for visitors – and there are currently about eight million of us, each year, down from 15 million before Covid.

As our driver told us, “Crime is low here. It’s the kind of place where, if you rob a bank, the teller will pick up the phone and call your mother.”

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



A Gibraltar monkey keeping watch on the busy harbour.



Gibraltar on a moody day.

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Turkey reintroduction a conservation success story



**SOUTH-
WESTERN
ONTARIO
OUTDOORS**

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The silence of the spring pre-dawn darkness was disrupted by a distant turkey gobbling.

"There's another," said Dr. Dave Ankney, who was sitting beside me for that morning hunt south of Langton, when a different, more distant tom turkey sounded off further south.

Taking place in 2011, the significance of turkey hunting with Ankney was akin to hunting with Aldo Leopold. While Leopold is revered as the father of conservation, Ankney was one of two people who were the driving force behind bringing turkeys back to Ontario and could be considered the father of the wild turkey reintroduction. Ontario's turkey population went from zero to tens of thousands in a few short decades, providing opportunities for hunting, bird watching and bringing back a bird that was part of the province's biodiversity.

Historically, wild turkeys were found in southern Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, records show the original range was north to Lake Simcoe, east between Toronto and Trenton and southwestern Ontario.

The large birds were a food source for First Nations, who used both snares and bows and arrows to harvest the birds. European settlers also saw the food potential with wild turkeys. Unfortunately, habitat loss from deforestation and unregulated hunting for food and market hunting led to the demise of the wild turkey in Ontario and Quebec. The situation was similar across North America, although pockets of birds remained in some American states.

With a dwindling population, Ontario's wild turkey season closed in 1905. The last recorded sighting of a wild turkey in Ontario was in 1909.

There were several attempts in the ensuing decades to bring wild turkeys back to Ontario using pen-raised birds. Information about the pen-raised wild turkeys is scarce, but MNR was involved in raising turkeys at the Normandale Fish Culture Station in Norfolk County. Being raised in a pen, the birds in these early attempts couldn't survive in the wild and the reintroduction failed.

Ankney, a University of Western Ontario zoology professor, his spouse Sandi Johnson and friends Joel Hopkins and spouse Ann Marie Green went on annual hunting trips. Turkey populations were taking off again in the U.S. due to restoration efforts and Hopkins heard about turkey hunting. The foursome, who have all since passed to the hunting grounds in the sky, made plans for a turkey hunt in Virginia in 1979.

When I hunted with Ankney – on a farm that was one of

the original release sites – he recounted the story. When he, Hopkins and their spouses went to Virginia, they didn't have high hopes of success and just wanted to see or hear a turkey. The success they had, taking three toms, hooked them on turkey hunting and was the start to Ontario's reintroduction. Their conversation on the way home was why a reintroduction shouldn't occur in Ontario.

Ankney's uncle assisted with the reintroduction of the birds in Michigan and he primed him with background information. Ankney then approached MNR regional ecologist Paul Prettv regarding bringing turkeys back to Ontario.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) was given credit for moving the reintroduction forward by Ankney. He brought them on board in 1982 and OFAH executive director Rick Morgan and Lance Males joined the reintroduction steering committee. Ankney later became president of the OFAH.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, which was behind the tremendous resurgence in the United States, came on board as a partner. NWTF provided the format for the first fund-raising dinner for the OFAH-administered Wild Turkey Trust Fund., which provided funding for trap and transfer programs. With its experience south of the border, NWTF also assisted in finding sources of turkeys to bring to Canada and provided expertise on trapping and transferring live birds.

The team working on the reintroduction had a first release in sight by 1982, but Ankney said there was still some reluctance due to the past failures with game farm birds. Then, they heard a provincial budget freeze could de-rail the turkey program.

Hopkins went in to see Owen Williams, the regional MNR biologist, and asked what it would cost to move it forward, thinking it would be \$50,000 or \$100,000. He was surprised to hear it was only \$5,000.

"I pulled out my cheque book and asked who I made the cheque out to," he told me more than a decade ago. The cheque was made out to the OFAH, since it administered the trust fund. It was never cashed but was used as leverage to make the wild turkey reintroduction happen.

Through some wildlife trading with American states – for moose and river otters – a source of wild birds was found. The first genuinely wild turkeys Ontario had seen in nearly eight decades arrived in specialized shipping crates from Missouri on March 6, 1984. They were released near Port Rowan in southern Ontario. More releases followed.

"You couldn't have done that today," said retired MNR biologist Dave Reid, who was one of the ministry staff who worked on the program. "It was just coincidence we had the right people in the right place at the right time. As turkey hunters, we reaped the benefits."

After a population was established, trap and transfer programs within the province and natural expansion saw the range of wild turkeys grow across southern Ontario and expand northwards. When numbers reached the necessary thresholds, the first turkey hunt was in 1987.

The reintroduction of the wild turkey has become the most successful wildlife management story in the province's history.

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Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What is the birthstone for April?
2. Where did the SS Edmund Fitzgerald sink?
3. What does CNN stand for?
4. What U.S. president served 4 terms?
5. What was Blackbeard's real name?
6. How many continents are there?
7. Peabody Museum of Natural History is located at what University?
8. What is the only country lemurs are native to?
9. A perfect game of bowling consists of how many points?
10. Star Wars "Revenge of the Sith" celebrates 20 years on what day?

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

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Saturday: Closed

EASTER

COLOURING CONTEST



We're on the hunt for
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Let's hop to it:

Decorate this Easter picture with your favourite colours, then drop it off at:

Sobey's Tillsonburg
 678 Broadway St,
 Tillsonburg, ON

3 top winners get an Easter basket full of Easter goodies!

Let your creativity shine!



Colouring Contest Rules:

1. Contest is open to children ages 4-10. Relatives of newspaper employees or contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
2. Contestants may use crayons, markers or coloured pencils to colour the pictures. Adults may assist in completing the contest entry form, but may not assist in colouring.

Winners will be selected by random draw and will be contacted via phone/email.

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Chuck's Roadhouse opens in Tillsonburg

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg's culinary scene has a new addition with the opening of Chuck's Roadhouse.

Owners Romy Sharma and Hitang Singla opened the new restaurant at 671 Broadway on April 12. The new facility is a bar and grill with an emphasis on quality, reasonably-priced food and sports teams.

Originally from India, Sharma studied business management in the United Kingdom. He moved to Canada in 2015 and has been in the restaurant industry for 12 years. After owning a Chuck's Roadhouse in another town, Sharma saw the opportunity with the new location opening in Tillsonburg.

"It's a great operation," he said. "It's a bar and grill. It's my passion since day one, I always wanted to operate a bar and grill."

Saying he's a small-town guy who isn't fond of cities, Sharma has moved to town with his wife Priyanka. Manager Gagan Singh, who has worked with Sharma the past six years, also moved to town. The restaurant already hired more than 25 employees.

In addition to the 130 indoor seats, work is under way to build a 60-seat outdoor heated patio. It will open April 1. In addition to the televisions that cover the entire wall behind the bar, additional screens are through the restaurant, providing viewing of a diversity of sports.

One of the features of the restaurant is its AAA steak for \$25.

"It's unbeatable," Sharma said.

He also talked about the lobster, all food being cooked



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Manager Gagan Singh, left, and owner Romy Sharma are part of the team behind the new Chuck's Roadhouse location that opened recently in Tillsonburg.

on site and the beer prices. Wednesday is rib night and appetizers are half price after 9 p.m.

Chuck's Roadhouse is growing rapidly, with 90 locations currently and a target to have 200 by the end of 2027.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

BUNNY SALE

The Tillsonburg Lions Club will be in the Tillsonburg Town Centre selling chocolate Easter bunnies on April 3-5, 10-12 and 17. Milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate, and no sugar added options are available. The club ordered 800 rabbits and are selling for \$5 each. The rabbits are made by Donini Chocolate in Belleville. Proceeds from the sale will be spent in the community.

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MUSIC CORNER

Members of Alexisonfire and The Flatliners bring raw energy to Paddy's Underground



BEN ADDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Finding new music to get excited about isn't quite the same as it was back in the late '80s and early '90s. Back when you had to flip through your uncle's record collection or wait for your older brother's friend to leave his CD binder at your house. The days when hours were spent glued to the TV screen watching music videos on

Much Music are long gone and replaced by social media apps where you can get stuck scrolling your way into an endless loop of 30-second reels where each new clip blends into the next.

Ricky Pridmore, frontman of Ontario's rising punk outfit Melt Away, knows that feeling. Like many, he found his way into music by surrounding himself with friends who shared the same passion.

"Melt Away is classic band assembly," Pridmore explains. "Bunch of old pals coming together one by one. I think it started with Brad and Tone and then PT joined with Cresswell. I ended up rounding it out later when they needed some more goons. You can never ever have too many goons until you have too many. Then you'll know."

The goons Ricky is refer-

ring to are his bandmates Brad Bently, Anthony Michal, Chris Cresswell and Paul Ramirez. Both Ramirez and Cresswell are known in the Canadian music scene as well as internationally for their other band The Flatliners while Michal and Pridmore are known for being a part of the now dissolved rock group The Snips.

The band's sound is a blistering blend of punk, alternative, and pure grit. With roots deeply embedded in the local punk and hardcore scene, Melt Away's live shows are raw, chaotic, and absolutely unforgettable. Their DIY ethos and relentless drive come through in every note.

For Pridmore, staying connected to music has always been a priority—even when he's not on stage. "Since The Snips, I've mostly been hack-

ing away in the tour merch space, which I love because I still get to be around music all the time."

In 2009 Ricky Pridmore started his own company called Presstime Design & Screenprint based out of Welland, with the goal to create lasting partnerships that were built on consistency and trust. Pridmore still runs the company while writing, recording and touring with Melt Away.

For Melt Away it's the studio where the magic is happening right now.

"We're in the studio right now with an excellent, heavy metal type guy named Marco Brassette. We've got four new tracks on the way. All bangers." Pridmore grins as he shares the news.

Brassette is a staple in the scene known for his engineer work on Alexisonfire's album *Old*

Crows/Young Cardinals which debuted at #81 on the Billboard 200 charts. Fans can expect a batch of hard-hitting, high-energy songs that reflect the band's signature sound and unfiltered attitude.

Melt Away is no stranger to Ontario's live music scene and their upcoming tour stop in Tillsonburg with the band Dead Tired promises to be one for the books. Dead Tired is a rock band that features Alexisonfire's frontman George Pettit on vocals. Both bands are gearing up to deliver unforgettable sets packed with energy, passion and plenty of sing-along moments.

Both bands are jammed with Canadian music scene virtuosos that know how to get a crowd moving and keep the energy high all night long. Whether you're a die-hard punk fan or just looking

for a great night out, Melt Away's live show paired with Dead Tired's set is guaranteed to leave you buzzing.

Come rock out on Friday, April 5 at Paddy's Underground located at 20 John Pound in Tillsonburg. The event features an opening set from Melt Away and a heading set from Dead Tired. Doors open at 8 p.m. with an 8:30 p.m. showtime. Anyone wanting to purchase tickets are able to for \$22.60 in advance by calling the Mill at 519-842-1878 or by visiting Eventbrite.ca. Tickets are available the night of the show for \$30 subject to availability. This is an all ages/licensed event. This is a wheelchair accessible venue.

Anyone wanting more details can visit paddysunderground.com or Paddy's Underground Facebook page.

UPCOMING SHOWS

APRIL 4 - SDN COMEDY W/ DANIEL HAMM
The Copper Mug
Free - 8 p.m.

APRIL 4 - ANDY COLONICO, GRAVLEY JAMES & MATTHEW RUNAWAY
Paddy's Underground
\$15 - 8pm - all ages/licensed

APRIL 5 - NORTH OF SIXTY
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #153
\$7 - Jumbo Hot Dogs Available for \$5
12pm - all ages/licensed

APRIL 5 - COTY ROBINSON
The Copper Mug
Free - 7pm

APRIL 5 - DEAD TIRED W/ MELT AWAY
Paddy's Underground
\$22.60 - 8pm - all ages/licensed

APRIL 6 - NORTH OF SIXTY
The Copper Mug
Free - 5pm

APRIL 8 - SPAGHETTI FUNDRAISER
The Copper Mug - 4:30pm

APRIL 11 - MUDMEN
ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH #153
\$25 - 7pm - all ages/licensed

APRIL 11 - MIESHA & THE SPANKS W/ CAPTAIN FIIN & THE SALTY DOGS
Paddy's Underground
\$10 - 8pm - all ages/licensed

APRIL 11 - MUSIC TRIVIA
The Copper Mug
Free - 8pm

APRIL 12 - THE MCBAINS, SCHOOL DAMAGE, JOHNNY TERRIEN & THE BAD LIEUTENANTS, TREVOR KOSTYRIA
The Copper Mug
\$10 - 8pm

APRIL 15 - THE COPPER MUG VISITS BUFFALO BUS TRIP
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APRIL 16 - EUCHRE NIGHT
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APRIL 25 - DANBERT NOBACON (OF CHUMBAWAMBA) NEW REVOLUTIONARIES, WHERE'S SHANE?
Paddy's Underground
\$20 - 8pm - all ages/licensed

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Cloud

I can be cracked, made, told, and played. What am I?
Joke

I have keys but open no locks. I have space but no room. You can enter, but you can't go outside. What am I?
Keyboard

You see me in the sky but never on land. I disappear in the morning but return at night. What am I?
Stars

I have teeth but can't bite. What am I?
Comb

I go around the world while staying in the same place. What am I?
Stamp

I get sharper the more you use me. What am I?
Pencil

SUDOKU

by PeterS 2025

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		5	6		3	1		

Solutions on page 34

Basic (5)

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WORD SEARCH

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

R	E	A	R	R	I	V	A	L	O	F	S	P	R	I	N	G	V	F	M
J	D	X	M	J	Q	Q	L	E	G	V	G	O	S	U	B	X	E	P	A
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I	P	S	L	Y	B	V	J	E	Z	L	Y	W	N	W	A	I	E	F	G

- Womens Day
- Tax season
- New PM Carney
- March break
- St Patricks Day
- Hudsons Bay
- Election called
- Shop Canadian
- Boycotting USA
- Signal fiasco
- Arrival of spring
- Blue Jays

COMING EVENTS

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DELHI & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Monday, April 14th at 7:30 p.m. at the Delhi Friendship Centre, 418 Queen St., Delhi. Special Guest: Jeff Leader - Topic - Autumn Reflections and Turtles. All welcome to join for an evening of fun and friendship. Enter at the parking lot off William Street.

TILLSONBURG COMMUNITY GARDENS SPRING REGISTRATION

Saturday, April 26, 2025, 1-3 p.m.

Tillsonburg Community Gardens,
30 Bloomer Street

(just past Tim Horton's)

Limited garden plots available.

CWL SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

St. Mary's Church

Saturday April 26, 9am until 1pm

Please come join us at our spring rummage sale. Clothing and footwear for the entire family. Housewares, glassware, bedding, home decor, toys and trinkets, jewelry, books and much more. Find us in the fully accessible church hall. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free. Please bring a bag (or two) to carry home your treasures.

THE FRIENDSHIP TABLE - FREE FRIENDSHIP DINNERS

Monday, Apr. 14, May 12, June 9, 2025;
Doors open at 4:30.

Dinner Served 5:00-6:30

St. Mary's Church Basement, Corner of
Rolph St & Venison St, Tillsonburg

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HELPING THOSE IN NEED. GOOD NEWS!! FREE FRIENDSHIP DINNERS ARE BACK! Everyone Welcome

WHAT MAKES WINTER SHORTER?

Listening, dancing and enjoying 50's-70's country music at the Ingersoll Jamboree! Every other Friday afternoon from 1-4 p.m. at the Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St S, Ingersoll. Walk ins welcome at the door.

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE Monthly Grief Support Group
Register at: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

TILLSONBURG

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

WHERE: VON Oxford Office 24 Brock St. W.,
Tillsonburg

TIME: 6:30PM-8:00PM

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford
St., Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30AM -12:00Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

WHERE: Sakura House Hospice 715180 Ox-
ford Rd.4, Woodstock

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00Noon

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?

Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: Tburg-Bridge.

TILLSONBURG LIONS

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for more information.....all are welcome.

COPING WITH GRIEF & LOSS

8-week grief support group starts Thursday,
April 3rd 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at Tillsonburg Sen-
iors Center.

Space is limited. Pre-registration required. Cost \$20 for members, \$25 non-members. Group led by trained facilitators and focuses on coping and living with loss. To register, contact Compassionate Grief Support at 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

ARE YOU IN A JAM?

April 4 & 11, May 2 & 23, June 6 & 20 from
1-4p.m. Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St S, In-
gersoll.

Ingersoll's Country Music Jamboree Club is celebrating 40 years. New members wanted. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Listen, dance, enjoy! The club welcomes walk-ins at the door.

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Starting at 7:00 pm

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March 26 - Tillsonburg Alliance, Pastor Ryan
Hutchins. April 02 - St. Mary's, Pastor Benjamin
Emery. April 09 - St. Paul's, Pastor Alan Adams.

ARRANGE IN APRIL AT MESSY CHURCH

Saturday April 5, 10am to 12 noon

Plan to have fun with crafts, music, stories,
snacks and a hot lunch. A family event @
St. Paul's United church 88 Bidwell St. Tillson-
burg

TILLSONBURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The April General Meeting will be held on
Monday, April 28th at 7 pm at Annandale
House National Historic Site.

We welcome Matthew Griffis, Digital, Literacy
and Local History Technician at the Tillsonburg
Public Library who will present a talk on the
60th Anniversary of the Oxford County Library.
Don't miss this free and very informative event!
All are welcome!!

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 153

16 Durham St, Tillsonburg, ON

OPEN MIC JAM WITH NORTH OF SIXTY BAND

Saturday April 5 from 1pm to 4pm. \$7 cash at
the door. Jumbo Hot Dogs available from 12-2
for \$5 each. For more info call 519-842-5281.

MUDMEN

Friday April 11 at 8pm.

Doors open at 7pm. Advance tickets \$25 at the
Legion or at <http://www.ticketscened.ca>. Get
your before we sell out again!

TILLSONBURG LEGION LUNCH

Wednesday April 9 from noon to 1pm

Serving homemade soups, sandwiches, dessert,
tea, and coffee for \$15 cash at the door. All Wel-
come! For more info call 519-842-5281.

OPEN JAM

Saturday, April 26th, starting at 1:00 pm
Last Saturday of every month.

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion
Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

Everyone is welcome to bring an instrument or
just come out and listen to the music. Free event.
Hot dogs available for purchase. Cash only, we
do not have debit, or ATM. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10
pm, Sat. 1 pm-10 pm, Sun. 1 pm-6 pm. For More
Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or
teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

ELECTIONS & MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 7th. Starting at 7:00 pm

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion
Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

Members only

Please bring your card to vote.

Not a member contact us to join. Cash only, we
do not have debit, or ATM. Wed.-Fri. 3 pm-10
pm, Sat. 1 pm-10 pm, Sun. 1 pm-6 pm. For More
Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or
teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS? WE WELCOME YOU!

The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion
Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario

You do not need to be a member to Volunteer,
Just contact the legion and leave your name and
number and purpose of your call. Someone will
get back to you as to where you might be needed.
Students and Adults welcome. Open hours. Wed.-
Fri. 3 pm-10 pm, Sat. 1 pm-10 pm, Sun. 1 pm-6
pm. For More Information call, the Legion at
519-443-5588 or teetervillelegionbranch526.ca

SILENT AUCTION / CONCERT WITH T.J. VELD

Burgessville Baptist Church (church on the
hill) in Burgessville

Saturday April 12. Doors open at 2 pm, bid-
ding starts at 3

The Amazing voice of T.J Veld will commence
soon after. Chili and different soups and sweets
will be available for a light snack. Bidding will
cease at 6 pm. Cash, Cheque or e-transfer is rec-
ommended. Come out and support this fabulous
fundraiser as we endeavour to update our kitch-
en and other projects within the community. To
God Be The Glory!

MENNONITE HISTORY IN ELGIN COUNTY

Bayham Historical Society, 6209 Plank Rd
Vienna

Saturday, April 26th, 2 PM

Text Barb at 519-550-3454 to reserve your seat
or email bayhamhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com

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QUIZ ANSWERS

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2. Lake Superior
3. Cable News Network
4. Franklin D. Roosevelt
5. Edward Teach
6. Seven
7. Yale
8. Madagascar
9. 300
10. April 25th

SUDOKU

1	4	2	5	3	6	8	7	9
6	3	9	8	2	7	5	4	1
8	5	7	9	1	4	2	3	6
7	6	1	4	8	9	3	2	5
3	9	4	2	6	5	7	1	8
5	2	8	3	7	1	6	9	4
2	1	6	7	9	8	4	5	3
4	8	3	1	5	2	9	6	7
9	7	5	6	4	3	1	8	2

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CLASSIFIEDS

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the family, friends and neighbours for your cards, best wishes, flowers, treats, etc. in celebration of my 100th birthday. You made this milestone very special for me. Sincerely, Marion Pettigrew

TREES

Hundreds of shade trees, fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, sweet and sour cherries, apricots, nectarines, blueberries, haskapp grapes, raspberries, elderberries etc. Lots of spruce, pine, cedars for windbreak and privacy hedges. Sizes 1-8 ft. in containers ready to go. Flowering shrubs and much more. Mon-Sat 7:00am to 6:00pm
Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Rd Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0 (1 Conc. North of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

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**FEBRUARY 6, 1963 –
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Join us for an Open House –
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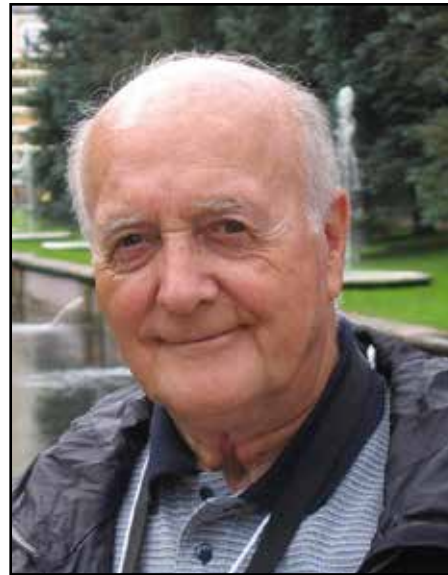
In Honour of

Carolyn Elizabeth Lamers

The Celebration is to be held on
**Saturday, April 26, 2025 from
12:00 – 3:00 pm**

**At the Carriage Hall,
25 Brock St. W., Tillsonburg**

WILLIAM JAMES PRATT APRIL 8, 1928 – MARCH 24, 2025



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of William James Pratt (Bill) on Monday, March 24, 2025, at the age of 96 years. A strong contributor to his community, Bill remained active and involved until the day he died. He was the beloved husband of the late Marion Meryl Pratt (2016) for almost 60 years, the much-loved father of Lynne Burns (Peter) of Tillsonburg, and Murray Pratt (Anne) of Toronto, cherished Grandfather of Andrew Burns (Sarah), Kaitlin Burns (David), Cameron Pratt and Duncan Pratt, and treasured Great Grandfather (GG) to Sasha, Amira and Carla (Burns). Bill is survived by his brother Don Pratt, sister-in-law Janet Pratt, brother-in-law Bill Elliott and sister-in-law Adrienna Elliott. He was also a special uncle and great uncle to many nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by daughter Heather Pratt, parents Fred and Grace Pratt (Mather), siblings Muriel Mabee (Bill) and Marion Bakos (David Sr.).

Bill was born and raised in Courtland Ontario. He attended Tillsonburg High School and continued his studies at the University of Western Ontario, where he graduated with a degree in Journalism in 1950. He started his full-time career as a reporter for The Tillsonburg News after graduation, and took on the role of Editor two years later.

He dedicated his career and his life to supporting his community and was instrumental in initiating a number of services and/or causes over the years. As a community newspaper editor, he felt it was his "duty to publicize and support people and their efforts to make good things happen". He expected nothing in return but did, indeed, receive a number of awards and recognition for his selfless contributions over the years.

Bill was involved in the startup of the Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre, the Annandale National Historic Site and Museum, the second ice pad, the kidney dialysis unit in Tillsonburg, Theatre Tillsonburg, the Tillsonburg Campus of Fanshawe College, the local Chamber of Commerce, the Tillsonburg Air Show, the Tillsonburg Community Centre, the addition to the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, and the Tillsonburg Seniors' Centre. He also volunteered on the Tillsonburg Fair Board for a number of years where he served as President. He was a tireless supporter of the local branch of the Canadian Cancer Society for over 60 years and participated in fundraising activity into his 90's. Marion and Bill joined the Tillsonburg Curling Club in the early 1960's. He served on the board and continued actively curling until January of this year. As Editor/Partner of Otter Publishing, Bill served as President of both the OCNA (Ontario Community Newspaper Association) and the CCNA (Canadian Community Newspaper Association).

In 1980 Bill was named Tillsonburg Citizen of the Year for his dedication and hard work in the community. He also received the Paul Harris Fellow award, the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee awards, the Confederation Medal, and the Holland/Canada Medal for his service. One of his proudest moments was the dedication of the "Pratt Gallery" at Annandale House.

While recognition for his service was always appreciated, Bill was (in his own words) content knowing that he had helped to make a positive contribution to his community - to people - over the years. He truly was one of a kind. Bill loved to spend time with his immediate and extended family - whether it was cottaging in Muskoka, special holidays (particularly Christmas), family picnics, Sunday dinners, or defeating his children and grandchildren in a lively game of cribbage. Marion and Bill travelled the world in later years where his penchant for photography and his love of scenery, sunsets and history were guaranteed.

Friends and family will be received at the Ostrander Funeral Home, 43 Bidwell St., Tillsonburg (519) 842-5221 on Friday, April 4, 2025 from 2pm to 4pm and 6pm to 8pm. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 11am at the Ostrander Funeral Home. Interment will be held at the Tillsonburg Cemetery followed by a Celebration of Life at the Tillsonburg Curling Club from 1pm to 3pm.

The family would like to acknowledge and thank staff members of the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital for their patient centered care and thoughtfulness during a very difficult time.

Donations will be graciously accepted by the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital Foundation, the Tillsonburg & District Historical Society, or the Annandale House Trust. Donations can be made directly with the charity or by contacting Ostrander's Funeral Home. Personal condolences may be made at www.ostrandersonline.com

MUSEUM CORNER

Place Name Origins

Have you ever wondered where Tillsonburg got its street, views and place names?

When Tillsonburg was incorporated in 1872, the streets of Tillsonburg were named with "good and sufficient reason." (Ellen Eff, 1963).

Ellen Eff continues in her document "How Streets Got Their Names." (1963)

"First, three sets of the older streets, Venison, Bear and Wolf have animal names, given by George Tillson due to his fondness of hunting." First principle street, Bloomer St, got its name from the bloomer forge George Tillson operated

there. First main street, Van St., no doubt was named in honour of the man associated with the founding of Tillsonburg, Benjamin Van Norman. Potter's Road got its name in conjunction with the pottery works said to be in operation there. Tillson Ave, likely names in honor of the Tillson Family."

While some streets were named in 1872, others have been added as the community grew. Let's explore the origins of other street names in Tillsonburg. Thank you to Laurel Beechey and Kathleen Watkin for delving into the archives to discover these street name origins.

Maple Lane was named for the maple lined farm lane of E.D. Tillson's Annandale Farm. Annandale House was located on a 600 acres experimental farm. The Tillson Farm was home to a 3-storey barn, a dairy building and a hog barn, as well as, an orchard of fruit trees, a stocked trout pond and several hundred acres of cultivated land. It was beloved for its maple lined farm lane.

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5 Reasons To Choose A Traditional Funeral

The primary goal of a funeral - whatever form it takes - is to give a departed loved one a befitting sendoff, traditional funerals remain an excellent way to achieve that goal.

Here are the benefits of having a traditional funeral.

1. Gives opportunities for family members to say their final farewell

The wake, the funeral service, and the burial are all part of a traditional funeral package. Together, they provide plenty of chances for family members to say their goodbyes in their own way.

Some family members or friends may not have been able to say goodbye before the person died, which can make it difficult for them to move on. Each funeral rite offers the opportunity to come to terms with the loss.

2. It helps celebrate the deceased's life

Traditional funerals are formal, structured events, but they still contain ample ways for loved ones to celebrate the deceased. Every element of a traditional funeral, such as the casket, religious readings, and eulogies offer elaborate and creative ways for a family to celebrate their loved ones life and memory.

3. It allows people to express their grief in a healthy way

Some people may be afraid of showing how they really feel about the death of a loved one because they are afraid that it will make them look weak or make other people uncomfortable around them. But having a traditional funeral can help them express their grief in a healthy way and let other people know that they are not alone in pain over the loss.

4. Family members can be with each other during a difficult time

Some family members may feel lonely after losing someone close to them. A traditional funeral preplanning can help them get through the loss by being with each other, allowing them to go through this period of sadness together.

Other types of funerals have their advantages, but there's usually only one service. Family members, who need to travel, may not get enough time to soak in the love and support before everyone goes their separate ways again. On the other hand, a traditional funeral has several services and offers plenty of moments for loved ones to connect.

On the other hand, a traditional funeral has several services and offers plenty of moments for loved ones to connect.

5. Provides a structured activity during a disorienting time

When a family member dies, it can be difficult for other family members to know what to do. They may feel like they are in a fog and not know how to handle their emotions.

A traditional funeral provides a structured activity that allows them to focus on something other than their grief. It also gives them time to process the death and begin their healing journey.

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